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SECOND EDITION

How Germany Fought the Battle of Britain



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THE BATTLE FOR ROME 1944

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The Allies' objective was Rome but the road from Naples to the Eternal City was dominated by the hill upon which stood the abbey of Monte Cassino, which had been fortified and integrated into the Gustav Line.

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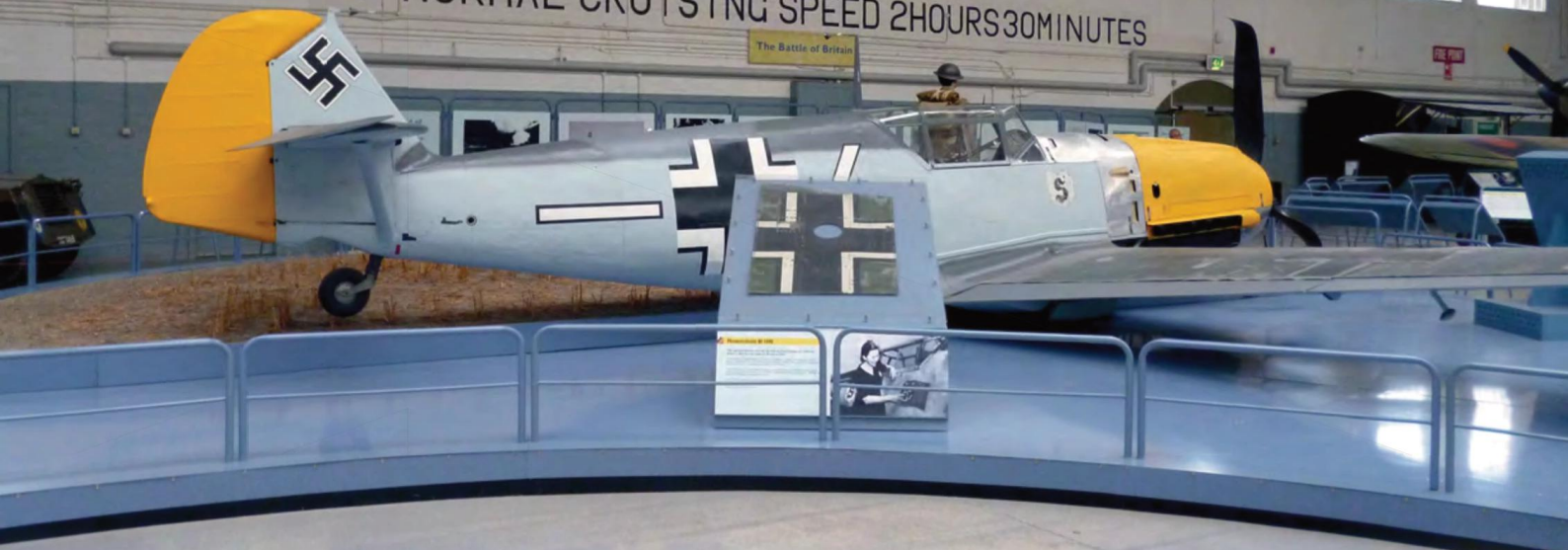
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Today, the Bf 109E-3 flown by Horst Perez on August 30, 1940 is positioned inside the Battle of Britain exhibition to illustrate its dramatic 'arrival' in a Sussex field. WWW.IWM.ORG.UK

GAUNTLET ENDURANCE
AT NORMAL CRUISING SPEED 2HOURS30MINUTES

The Battle of Britain

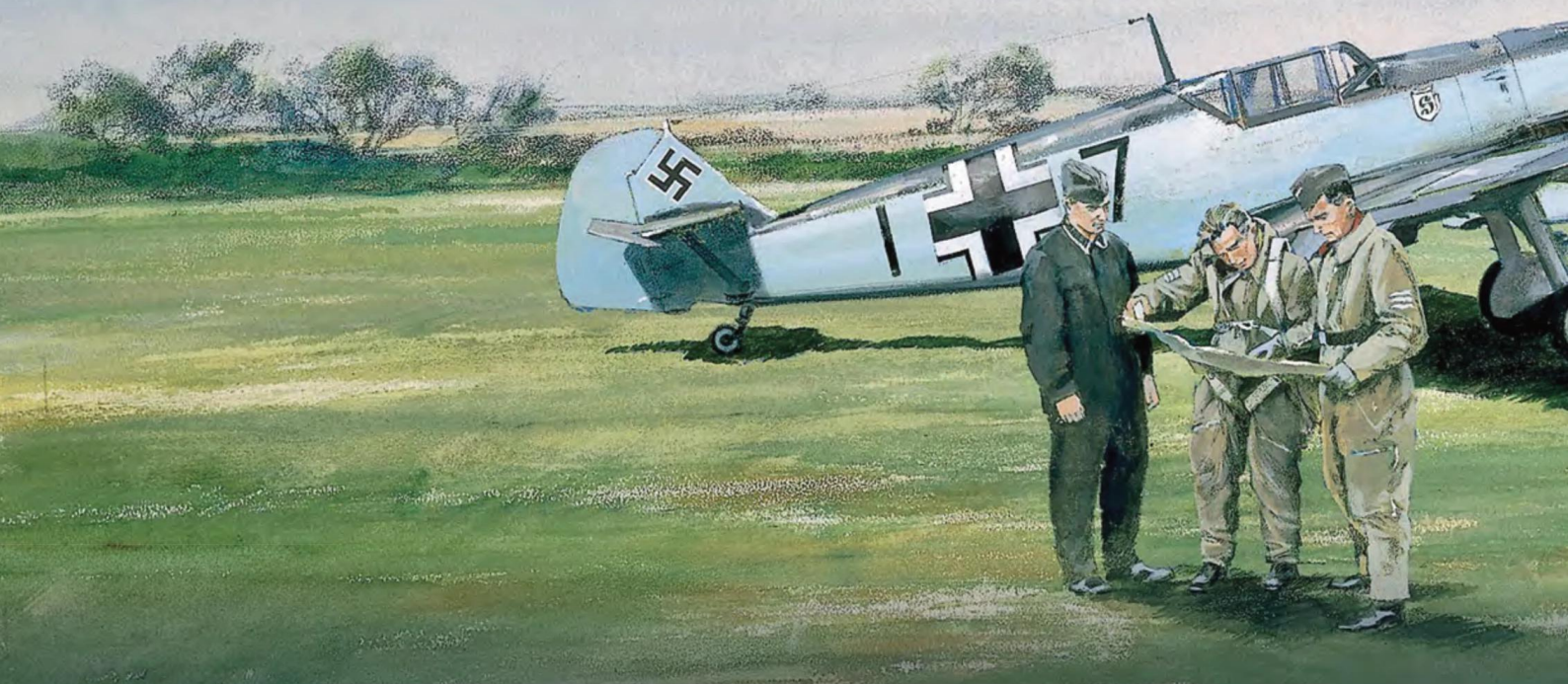


Uffz Horst Perez, piloting a Messerschmitt Bf 109E-3 of 4/JG 26, tried his best to shake off Sgt Don Kingaby of 92 Squadron, in a Supermarine Spitfire I, during a low-level chase along the Sussex coast on August 30, 1940. At about 5.30pm, Horst force-landed his Bf 109 in a field near Eastbourne and was captured. Don was awarded a 'damaged' to add to his fast-building tally of victories. 'Cliff-top Chase' is one of a series of limited edition prints from Geoff Nutkins. WWW.AVIARTNUTKINS.COM

FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



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LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



SECOND EDITION

This special anniversary publication was originally released in 2015 as **LUFTWAFFE EAGLES - BATTLE FOR BRITAIN SPECIAL EDITION**

ABBREVIATIONS / GLOSSARY

To help readers, details of Luftwaffe ranks, unit structure and prefixes – used throughout this magazine – can be found on pages 6 and 17.

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Cover: Specially-commissioned artwork from Adam Tooby: Major Adolf Galland, Geschwader Kommodore of Stab/JG 26 leading Bf 109E-4s across the Channel, late 1940. For more on Adam's work see page 98. ADAM TOOBY - WWW.ADAMTOOBY.COM

These pages: 'Somewhere in France', Messerschmitt Bf 109s of JG 26 in the Pas de Calais, August 1940 - a painting by Geoff Nutkins. For more on Geoff's work, take a look at page 18. COURTESY GEOFF NUTKINS - WWW.AVIARTNUTKINS.COM

FLÜGEL DES ADLERS

HIGH *Command*

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE RAF'S COMMANDERS IN THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN, BUT WHAT ABOUT THEIR LUFTWAFFE COUNTERPARTS? **CHRIS GOSS** EXAMINES THEIR CAREERS

Below
Göring visiting fighter units during the Battle of Britain. To his left is Bruno Loerzer (II Fliegerkorps) and, to his right, Major Adolf Galland, Kommodore of JG 26.

Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring may have been Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe (commander-in-chief of the air force) in Berlin but as the Third Reich expanded, the capital was further and further from the front line. The day-to-day prosecution of the Battle of Britain was left to the high commanders of three Luftflottenkommandos (normally shortened to Luftflotten).

Essentially, the Luftflottenkommandos were territorial: Luftflotte 2 based in

Brussels, Belgium; Luftflotte 3 in Paris, France; and Luftflotte 5 in Stavanger, Norway. Each contained subordinate Fliegerkorps, designated by a Roman numeral, or Fliegerdivisionen (Arabic numbers), each equivalent to an RAF group, comprising bomber and reconnaissance units.

Luftflotten 2 and 3 also encompassed Jagdfliegerführers (normally shortened to Jafü) 2 and 3 which included twin- and single-engined fighter units.

To examine the high commanders tasked with annihilating the RAF so that a seaborne invasion could be

staged, we shall look at those in charge on Adlertag, or 'Eagle Day'. This was August 13, 1940, the date when the Luftwaffe launched the Battle for Britain.

LUFTFLOTTE 2: KESSELRING

Luftflotte 2 effectively consisted of 24 bomber, two dive-bomber, 13 fighter and four twin-engined fighter Gruppen, two long-range reconnaissance Staffeln and four short-range reconnaissance Staffeln. It also had three night-fighter Gruppen, but these played no part



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



2 in readiness for the Battles of France and Britain.

Kesselring remained at the head of Luftflotte 2 for the invasion of the Soviet Union, and at the same time was Oberbefehlshaber Süd, in charge of all German military forces in the Mediterranean. In June 1943, he handed over Luftflotte 2 to Generalfeldmarschall Wolfram Freiherr von Richthofen and in March 1945 was appointed Oberbefehlshaber West until the end of the war.

Above
Messerschmitt Bf 109E-4 'Yellow 10' of 9/JG 26 - a Luftflotte 2 unit.
PETE WEST © 2015

Left
Hermann Göring in conversation with the commander of Luftflotte 2, Albert Kesselring. The photo is thought to have been taken in Brussels during the Battle of Britain,

Below left
Göring visiting a unit during the Battle of Britain; in the background is his friend Bruno Loerzer of II Fliegerkorps.

Below
Luftflotte 2 Messerschmitt Bf 109E-3 'Yellow 12' of I/JG 27. PETE WEST © 2015



in the offensive. A Gruppe was equivalent to an RAF wing and a Staffel to an RAF squadron.

Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring commanded Luftflotte 2. Born in 1885, he joined the army aged 19 and fought on the Eastern and Western Fronts as an artillery officer in what was then called the Great War (1914-18). He remained with the army until 1933 and then transferred to the Reichsluftfahrtministerium (RLM) where he was actively involved in the formation of the new Luftwaffe.

In 1936 he became Luftwaffe Chief of Staff and on the outbreak of war in 1939 was commanding Luftflotte 1. After the Polish campaign, he was given Luftflotte



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



Above
Albert Kesselring,
Luftflotte 2.

Above right
Ulrich Grauert, I
Fliegerkorps.



Generaloberst GRAUERT



Below
Kesselring visiting
Gefechtsstand Caesar, or
the 'Holy Mountain', the
Battle HQ for Luftflotte 2
just south of Sangatte in
the Pas de Calais during
the Battle of Britain. To the
left is Hauptmann Viktor
von Lossberg, Luftflotte 2
Operations Officer.

Kesselring was a skilled leader and tactician, admired by the Allies – who called him 'Smiling Albert' – as well as his own personnel, who called him 'Uncle Albert'. After the war, he was found guilty of war crimes and sentenced to death, but this was later commuted to life imprisonment.

After release in 1952 Kesselring became a vocal champion of German soldiers. He suffered a heart attack and died in 1960: his funeral was all but a military occasion, proof of his popularity.

LUFTFLOTTE 2: GRAUERT

Subordinate to Luftflotte 2 were I and II Fliegerkorps, 9 Fliegerdivision and Jafü 2. Based at Beauvais in France, I Fliegerkorps was commanded by Generaloberst Ulrich Grauert. Born in 1889, he joined the army as an artillery officer, aged 20, and at the start of the Great War led a platoon.

Grauert transferred to flying duties and in July 1916 was posted to the artillery liaison unit Kasta 28 as an observer, and is believed to have commanded it up to December that

year. He later led Fliegerabteilung 256 (Artillerie) from August to September 1918 before accepting staff duties for the remainder of the war.

Grauert remained with the army, resuming non-flying duties with the artillery before transferring to the new Luftwaffe in 1933. Promotion came fast: Oberst in 1934 and Generalmajor in 1936. During this time, he held a number of staff and training posts and qualified as a pilot.



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



Centre left
Kesselring (second from left) deep in discussion with (left) General der Flieger Hans Jeschonnek (Luftwaffe Chief of Staff), Generalleutnant Wilhelm Speidel (Chief-of-Staff for Luftflotte 2) and General der Flieger Bruno Loerzer (II Fliegerkorps) at Sangatte, summer 1940.

Left
Göring and Loerzer with Major Werner Mölders (right), Kommodore of JG 51.

"Kesselring was a skilled leader and tactician, admired by the Allies – who named him 'Smiling Albert' – as well as his own personnel, who called him 'Uncle Albert'."

LUFTFLOTTE 2 ORDER OF BATTLE

HEADQUARTERS: BRUSSELS, UNDER KESSELRING

Bombers – Kampfgeschwader (KG)

Dornier Do 17	KG 2, KG 3, KG 76 (Ju 88 in II Gruppe)
Focke-Wulf Fw 200	KG 40 (HQ flight only)
Heinkel He 111	KG 1 (Ju 88s in III Gruppe), KG 4 (Ju 88s in III Gruppe), KG 26, KG 53, KG 126
Junkers Ju 88	KG 30, KG 77

Dive-Bombers – Stukageschwader (StG)

Junkers Ju 87	StG 1, StG 2 – each had Do 17s within the HQ flight
---------------	---

Fighters – Jagdgeschwader (JG)

Messerschmitt Bf 109	JG 1, JG 3, JG 26, JG 27, JG 51, JG 52, JG 53, JG 54
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Heavy Fighters – Zerstörer (ZG)

Messerschmitt Bf 110	ZG 7, ZG 26
----------------------	-------------

Operational Evaluation and Tactics – Lehrgeschwader (LG) and Erprobungsgruppe (Erpro)

Messerschmitt Bf 109	LG 2, Erpro 210 (also Bf 110)
Junkers Ju 87	LG 1 (Bf 110 in V Gruppe)

Notes: As of August 1940. Reconnaissance and miscellaneous units not included.

LUFTFLOTTE 2: LOERZER

Based at Ghent in Belgium, II Fliegerkorps was commanded by General der Flieger Bruno Loerzer. He was born in 1891 and after joining the army, in 1914 learned to fly. During his tuition, he met Göring. In 1915, he became a fighter pilot and by the end of the war had achieved 44 victories and was awarded the Pour le Mérite (the 'Blue Max').

Post-war, Loerzer left the army in 1920, after which he helped form the Lithuanian Air Force. During the early 1930s he worked in civil aviation and then in 1935, thanks to his friendship with Göring, joined the Luftwaffe.

After several flying appointments with fighter units, in 1938 he was promoted to Generalmajor and appointed Inspector of Fighters. Then came leadership of 2 Fliegerdivision and, in October 1939, command of II Fliegerkorps. From February 1943 he took the first of a number of posts in the RLM. Captured by the Americans in 1945, he was released three years later. Bruno Loerzer died in Hamburg in 1960.

LUFTFLOTTE 2: COELER

Heading 9 Fliegerdivision was Generalleutnant Joachim Coeler, based at Soesterberg in Holland. Born in 1891, Coeler was a navy man who learned to fly, and after the Great War stayed on as an instructor and in staff posts.

In 1938 he was promoted to Generalleutnant, later to command I Fliegerdivision for the attack on Poland in September 1939.

Promoted to General der Flieger the following month, he was given command of I Fliegerkorps for the invasion of France and the Low Countries. Grauert's bomber and fighter units acquitted themselves well and for his leadership he was

awarded the Ritterkreuz (Knight's Cross) on May 29, 1940.

Generaloberst Grauert continued to run I Fliegerkorps until May 15, 1941 when the Junkers Ju 52 he was flying in was shot down south of St Omer by two Supermarine Spitfires from 303 Squadron. There were no survivors and he was buried in the Nampcel Military Cemetery.



Above
Joachim Coeler of 9
Fliegerdivision.

Below
Disembarking from a
Junkers Ju 52, Sperrle
visits a bomber unit,
September 1941.

In 1933, he transferred to the Luftwaffe, becoming Inspector of Maritime Aviation.

As a Generalmajor, Coeler was given command of 9 Fliegerdivision by July 1940; in October it was redesignated IX Fliegerkorps. At the end of 1942 he took on XIV Fliegerkorps before completing his Luftwaffe career as General der Transportflieger. Joachim Coeler died in 1955.

LUFTFLOTTE 3 ORDER OF BATTLE

HEADQUARTERS: PARIS, UNDER SPERRLE

Bombers - Kampfgeschwader (KG)

Dornier Do 17	KG 606, KG 806
Heinkel He 111	KG 27, KG 55, KG 100
Junkers Ju 88	KG 51, KG 54

Dive-Bombers - Stukageschwader (StG)

Junkers Ju 87	StG 3 - also had Do 17s and He 111s within the HQ flight
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Fighters - Jagdgeschwader (JG)

Messerschmitt Bf 109	JG 2, JG 53
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Heavy Fighters - Zerstörer (ZG)

Messerschmitt Bf 110	ZG 76
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Operational Evaluation and Tactics - Lehrgeschwader (LG)

Junkers Ju 88	LG 1
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Notes: As of August 1940. Reconnaissance and miscellaneous units not included.

LUFTFLOTTE 2: VON DÖRING

The final subordinate Luftflotte 2 organisation was Jafü 2, led by Oberst Kurt-Bertram von Döring, based in Wissant in France. Born in 1889, von Döring joined the army in 1907 and before the outbreak of war in 1914 transferred to the air service. He ended the war heading Jasta 66, having achieved 11 'kills'.

Leaving the military in 1920,

he became an instructor in the Argentinian and Peruvian air forces and later was a representative of the German aviation industry in China. In 1934, he joined the Luftwaffe and ran the flying school at Celle; then I Gruppe/Jagdgeschwader 132 (I/JG 132); and finally JG 134, JG 142, Zerstörergeschwader 142 (ZG 142) and ZG 26.

He took on Jafü 2 in December 1939, a post he held for the next



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



"Luftflotte 3 was commanded by Generalfeldmarschall Hugo Sperrle who - if his Luftflotte 2 counterpart was 'Smiling' - seems from photographs to have had a permanent scowl."

Top right
Hugo Sperrle, Luftflotte 3.

Above left
Sperrle in the late spring of 1944; he was soon to be forcibly retired.

year. In turn, Generalmajor von Döring became Inspector of Fighters and eventually took charge of 1 Nachtjagddivision. His last operational command was 3 Jagddivision, until November 1943, after which he served in the RLM until the end of the war. Kurt-Bertram von Döring died in 1960.

LUFTFLOTTE 3: VON SPERRLE

As of Adlertag, Luftflotte 3 consisted 15 bomber, eight dive-bomber/ground attack, four twin-engined fighter and nine fighter Gruppen, five long-range reconnaissance Staffeln, nine short-range reconnaissance Staffeln and a single weather reconnaissance Staffel.

Luftflotte 3 was commanded by Generalfeldmarschall Hugo Sperrle who - if his Luftflotte 2 counterpart was 'Smiling' - seems from photographs to have had a permanent scowl. Born in

Ludwigsburg in 1885, Sperrle joined the army at 18, transferring to the air service at the outbreak of war. He served as an observer and won a number of decorations.

After the war, Sperrle returned to the army, transferring in 1934 to the Luftwaffe with the rank of Oberst, and was given command of 1 Fliegerdivision. Promotions followed speedily: Höherer Fliegerkommandeur II in Berlin in 1935, becoming Generalmajor; then commanding general of Luftkreis V with an interlude from 1936 to head up the Legion Condor in Spain before returning to Luftkreis V in October 1937.

Promoted to General der Flieger in November 1937, Sperrle was given command of Luftwaffengruppenkommando 3, which in February 1939 became Luftflotte 3. He was relieved of his post in August 1944.

(Luftflotte 3 was redesignated Luftwaffenkommando West in September 1944.)

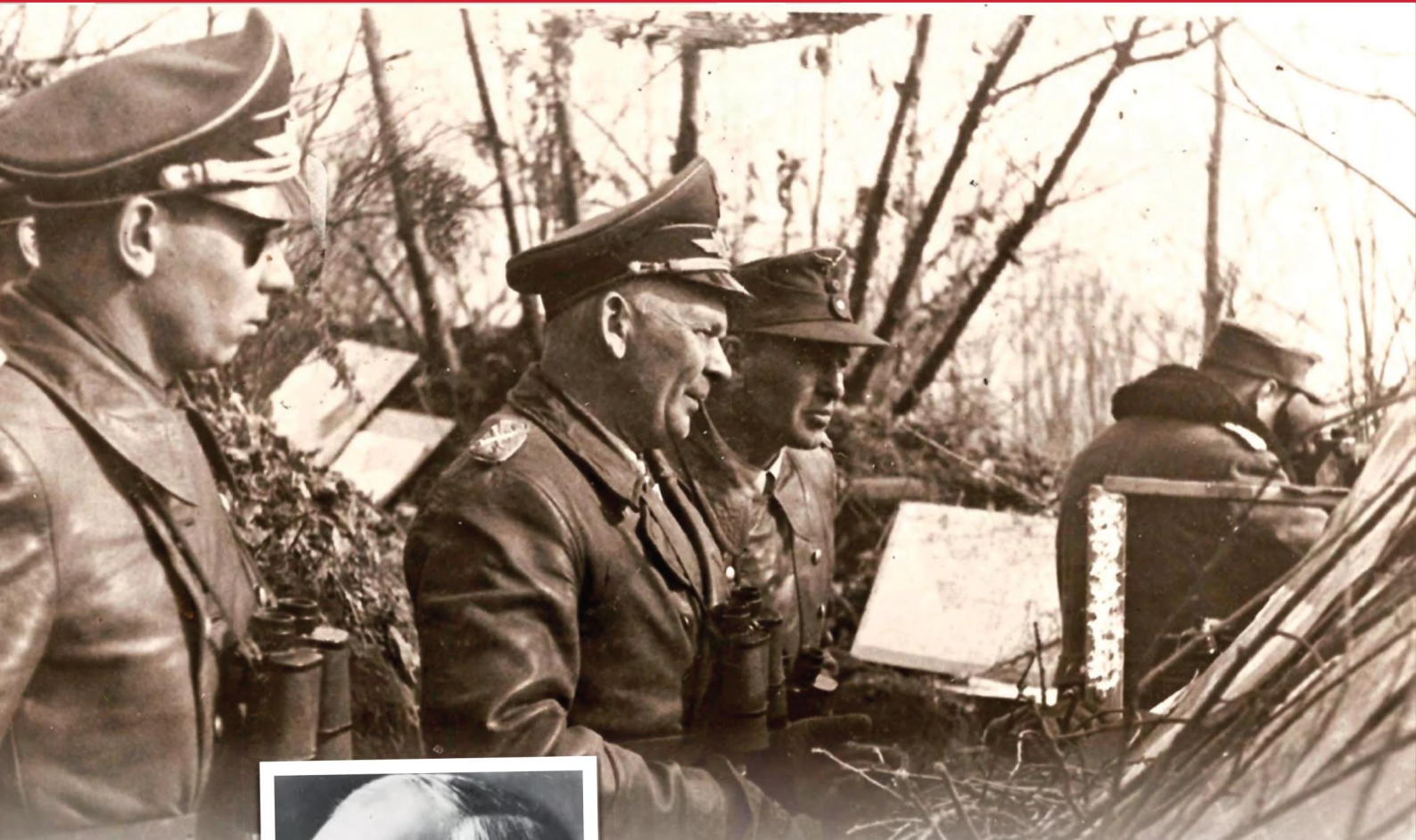
Von Sperrle, the longest serving Luftflotte commander, became increasingly disillusioned: the strain he must have suffered for four years, and disagreements with Göring and others, affected him. For the remainder of the war, he was 'Placed at the disposal of the Reichsmarschall'.

In 1945 he was accused of war crimes but acquitted. By then, he was a broken man and his health declined rapidly. Hugo Sperrle died in Munich in 1953.

LUFTFLOTTE 3: VON RICHTHOFEN

Subordinate to Luftflotte 3 were IV, V and VIII Fliegerkorps and Jafü 3. At Deauville, commanding VIII Fliegerkorps was General der Flieger Wolfram Freiherr von





Above
Wolfram Freiherr von Richthofen (second from left) commanding Luftflotte 2, 1944.

Right
Robert Ritter von Greim, V Fliegerkorps.

Bottom right
Ritter von Greim visiting KG 51 in early 1941. He is shaking hands with Lt Egon Artz of 2/KG 51.



went to university before returning to the cavalry, transferring to the Luftwaffe in 1933. With his degree in aeronautical engineering, he was initially involved with aircraft procurement and design.

At the end of 1936 von Richthofen joined the Legion Condor, becoming Chief of Staff to Hugo Sperrle. After a brief period heading IV Gruppe/Kampfgeschwader 153 (IV/KG 153) back in Germany, he was promoted to Oberst in January 1938 and given command of KG 257.

By the end of the year he had been promoted to Generalmajor, commanding the Legion Condor until July 1939. As war approached, he led the special deployment headquarters, Fliegerführer zur besonderen Verwendung (zbV), and was involved in the Polish campaign.

Fliegerführer zbV was redesignated 9 Fliegerdivision and, later, VIII Fliegerkorps. Under its three names, von Richthofen commanded the organisation with

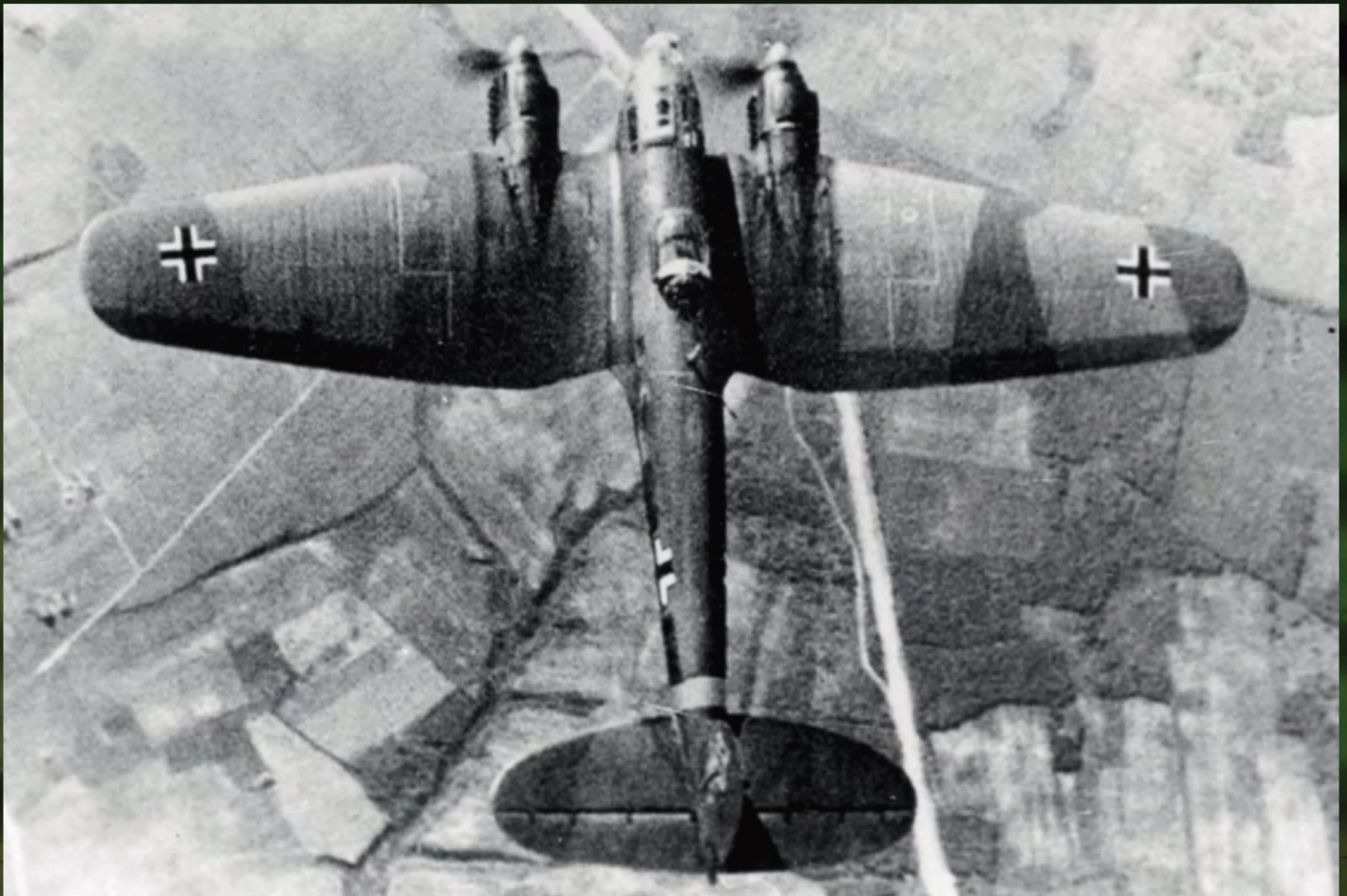
Richthofen, cousin of Manfred, the famous 'Red Baron'. Von Richthofen was born in 1895 and, at 18, enrolled in the army as a cavalry officer.

Initially fighting on the Western Front during the Great War before moving to the east, von Richthofen didn't transfer to the air service until 1917, and even then didn't fly operationally until April 1918 when he joined his cousin's Jagdgeschwader 1: on his first operational flight the 'Red Baron' was shot down and killed. Wolfram ended the war with eight 'kills'.

The war over, von Richthofen



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



"...von Richthofen didn't transfer to the air service until 1917, and even then didn't fly operationally until April 1918 when he joined his cousin's Jagdgeschwader 1..."

LUFTWAFFE RANKS, ABBREVIATIONS AND RAF EQUIVALENTS

Generalfeldmarschall	-	Marshal of the RAF
Generaloberst	-	Air Chief Marshal
General der Flieger	-	Air Marshal
Generalleutnant	-	Air Vice-Marshal
Generalmajor	-	Air Commodore
Oberst	Oberst	Group Captain
Oberstleutnant	Obstlt	Wing Commander
Major	Major	Squadron Leader
Hauptmann	Hptm	Flight Lieutenant
Oberleutnant	ObLt	Flying Officer
Leutnant	Lt	Pilot Officer
Oberfähnrich	Ofhr	Officer aspirant, junior officer under training
Stabsfeldwebel	Stabfw	Warrant Officer
Oberfeldwebel	Obfw	Flight Sergeant
Feldwebel	Fw	Sergeant
Unterfeldwebel	Ufw	None
Unteroffizier	Uffz	Corporal
Hauptgefreiter	Hptf	None
Obergefreiter	Obgf	Leading Aircraftman
Gefreiter	Gf	Aircraftman, 1st Class
Flieger	Fg	Aircraftman, 2nd Class

great distinction: he was awarded Oakleaves to the Ritterkreuz in July 1941 and by February 1942 had been promoted to Generaloberst.

As Generalfeldmarschall, he commanded Luftflotte 4; and then Luftflotte 2 from 1943. Wolfram Freiherr von Richthofen was diagnosed with a brain tumour and relieved of his duties in October 1944. He died in July 1945 in captivity – an ignominious end for such an experienced leader.

LUFTFLOTTE 3: VON GREIM

Based at Villacoublay, outside Paris, V Fliegerkorps was commanded by General der Flieger Ritter von Greim. Born Robert Greim in 1892, he was an army cadet from 1906 to 1911, after which he signed up as an artillery officer. Following action on the Western Front, in 1915 he transferred to the air service, starting as an artillery observer before retraining to be a pilot.

In April 1917 von Greim was posted to Jasta 34 and by the end of the war had achieved 28 'kills'. He was awarded the Pour le Mérite and the Max-Joseph Order, the latter entitling him to add 'Ritter von' to his name. ➤

Above
Backbone of the bomber fleets of Luftflotte 2 and 3 – the Heinkel He 111.
JOHN WEAL VIA ANDY THOMAS

COMMON LUFTWAFFE UNIT PREFIXES, ABBREVIATIONS AND ROLE

Aufklärungs	Aufkl	Tactical reconnaissance
Fernaufklärungs	Fern	Long range, or strategic, reconnaissance
Jagd	J	Fighter
Jagdbomber	Jabo	Fighter-bomber
Kampf	K	Bomber
Küstenflieger	Kü Fl	Coastal aviation, navy co-operation
Nachtjagd	NJ	Night-fighter
Panzer	Pz	Anti-tank
Schlacht	SG	Close support
Schnellkampf	SK	High-speed bomber
Seenot	SN	Air-sea rescue
Sturm	Sturm	Assault, usually fighters engaging bomber streams
Sturzkampf	Stuka	Dive-bomber
Zerstörer	Z	Heavy fighter (ie, twin-engined)

Note: A Geschwader operating Messerschmitt Bf 110s was a Zerstörergeschwader, abbreviated as ZG; a Geschwader flying Focke-Wulf Fw 190s was a Jagdgeschwader, abbreviated as JG, and so on.

Right
Alfred Keller of IV
Fliegerkorps.

He left the army in 1920 and went on to study law at university, later joining the Nazi Party. Von Greim was invited to China to help form its air force and in 1934 took a post in the Luftwaffe, initially commanding I/JG 132 Richthofen and then JG 132.

In 1935 he was appointed as Inspector of Fighters and Dive-Bombers. Early in 1938, Generalmajor Ritter von Greim took on 31 (then renumbered 5) Fliegerdivision and in October 1939 led V Fliegerkorps, a post he kept until April 1942 when, as General der Flieger, he took over Luftwaffekommando Ost (redesignated Luftflotte 6 in May 1943).

Just three weeks before the end of the war von Greim became Generalfeldmarschall and commander of the Luftwaffe. Captured by the Americans, he feared being handed over to the Russians and on May 24, 1945 this highly-decorated leader committed suicide.

LUFTFLOTTE 3: KELLER

Generalmajor Alfred Keller commanded IV Fliegerkorps, based at Dinard on France's western coast. Born in 1890, he was another army officer who transferred to the air service, but in his case before the Great War started. He served on the Western Front for the whole of the conflict, initially with reconnaissance, then bomber, units. Keller was highly decorated, including the Pour le Mérite.

Post-war he left military service and was actively involved in civil



"Generalmajor Alfred Keller commanded IV Fliegerkorps... Born in 1890, he was another army officer who transferred to the air service, but in his case before the Great War started."

aviation until 1934 when he rejoined the army, and later the Luftwaffe, with the rank of Oberst. Postings included: command of the reconnaissance school, I/KG 154 then KG 154, and Höherer Fliegerkommandeur Luftkreis IV.

Other appointments followed, culminating with command of 4 Fliegerdivision and, in October 1939, IV Fliegerkorps. Keller was awarded the Ritterkreuz on July 19, 1940.

Handing over Luftflotte IV to Generalmajor Kurt Pflugbeil on August 20, 1940, Keller then headed up Luftflotte 1, which he led in the Balkans and Russia until his retirement in June 1943. At the end of the war, he was captured in Lübeck by British soldiers and later released. Alfred Keller died in 1974.

LUFTFLOTTE 3: JUNCK

The final Luftflotte 3 commander was Oberst Werner Junck. Born in 1895, he learned to fly in 1913 but enlisted in the army as an artillery officer. Transferring to flying duties in 1916, he was wounded three times and ended the war as a fighter pilot with five 'kills'.

Post-war, Junck joined the border police before working in civil aviation – and with the illegal training of German pilots in the Soviet Union. Signing up with the Luftwaffe in 1934, his flying appointments included command of I/Stukageschwader 165, JG 334 and JG 133. In early 1939, he became Inspector of Fighters, Twin-Engined Fighters and Ground Attack Aircraft before leading Jafü 3 from June 1940.

LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

LUFTFLOTTE 3 BASES

1 Brest (fighters - JG) 2 Lannion (heavy fighters - ZG) 3 Dinan (JG) 4 St Malo (ZG)
5 Cherbourg (bombers - KG) 6 Rennes (JG) 7 Angers (dive-bombers - StG) 8 Crépon (JG)
9 Caen (KG, StG, ZG) 10 Plumetot (JG) 11 Le Havre (JG) 12 Chartres (KG) 13 Beaumont le
Roger (JG) 14 Évreux (KG) 15 St André (KG) 16 Tours (KG) 17 Dreux (KG) 18 Châteaudun
(KG) 19 Villacoublay (KG) 20 Orléans (KG) 21 Étampes (KG) 22 Brétigny (KG) 23 Orly (KG)
24 Toussus le Noble (ZG) 25 Melun (KG). PETE WEST © 2015

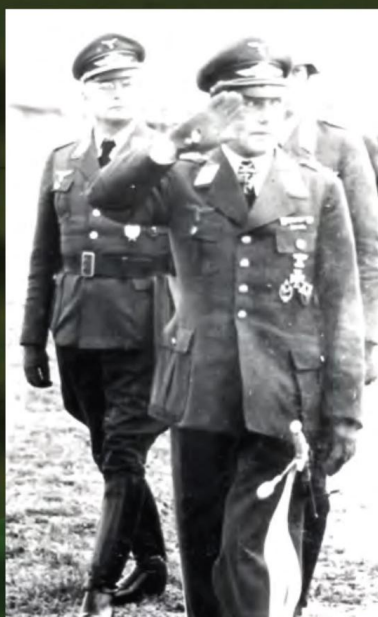


Above
Hans Geisler of X
Fliegerkorps.

Left
Geisler visiting KG 30 in
1941. The lowest-most left-
hand badge is his Imperial
Navy pilot's badge.

Far left
Werner Junck, Jafü 3.

Below left
Hans-Jürgen Stumpff of
Luftflotte 5.



entered the army in 1907 and, like Kesselring, did not transfer to flying duties until 1933 when he joined the Luftwaffe. Promotion was swift – in 1937 he became Luftwaffe Chief of Staff with the rank of Generalmajor.

In early 1940, he assumed command of Luftflotte 1 but at the start of the Battle of France was given the less intense Luftflotte 5, remaining in post until November 1943. Stumpff retired from active service in 1944 only to be recalled towards the war's end, becoming provisional Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe.

As supreme commander of the Luftwaffe, Stumpff was one of the signatories of the German surrender. Accused of war crimes, he was acquitted of all charges and died in 1968.

LUFTFLOTTE 5: GEISLER

The only subordinate unit in Luftflotte 5 was X Fliegerkorps, co-located in Stavanger and run by General der Flieger Hans Ferdinand Geisler. Born in 1891, Geisler was a naval officer from 1909 until he transferred to the Luftwaffe with the rank of Oberst in 1934.

With his naval background, Geisler was the ideal officer for a maritime command and in September 1939 was given 10 Fliegerdivision, which became X Fliegerkorps. Awarded the Ritterkreuz at the same time as most other senior officers after the Battle of France, he remained with X Fliegerkorps until his retirement in August 1942. Hans Ferdinand Geisler died in 1966. ✚



In May 1941 he ran the Luftwaffe detachment in Iraq before being posted to command in turn: Jafü 1, Jagddivision Mitte, 3 Jagddivision and II Jagd Korps. A fighter pilot to the end, he was awarded the Ritterkreuz in June 1944. Werner Junck retired from active service in July 1944 as Generalleutnant; he died in 1976.

LUFTFLOTTE 5: STUMPPF

In August 1940 Luftflotte 5 had four bomber, one twin-engined fighter, two fighter and one maritime Gruppen, five long-range reconnaissance Staffeln and a weather reconnaissance Staffel.

Generaloberst Hans-Jürgen Stumpff, the head of Luftflotte 5,

BLITZED!

ANDY THOMAS EXPLAINS HOW A BRILLIANTLY EXECUTED PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE IN THE EARLY HOURS OF MAY 10, 1940 SEALED THE FATE OF THE BELGIAN AIR FORCE



Above
CR.42s 27 and 21 of the 4ème Escadrille and a Fairey Fox damaged in their hangar at Nivelles on May 10.

Right
Burnt out shell of a CR.42 bearing mute testimony to the effectiveness of the 'Stuka' attack on Brustem on May 10.

Below
Having evacuated Nivelles, 1ere Sgt Marcel Michotte of the 4ème Escadrille turned his Fiat CR.42 over on landing at Brustem. MARCO GARGARI VIA LUDOVICO SLOGNO

In many respects the Battle for Britain began as dawn broke on May 10, 1940 when Germany launched its offensive against France and the Low Countries. The ferocious assault opened with low-flying Luftwaffe aircraft inflicting devastation on airfields throughout France, Belgium and Holland.

These strikes were intended to shatter Allied air power on the ground and in this they were largely successful. It was a sight that later in the summer Hermann Göring hoped to replicate against the airfields of RAF Fighter Command.

CAUGHT ON THE GROUND

The small and mainly obsolescent

Aéronautique Militaire Belge was practically wiped out during

the attacks of May 10, suffering heavy losses on the ground. At Schaffen, Belgium's main fighter base, the onslaught destroyed three Hawker Hurricanes and badly damaged six more. Another two were destroyed when their hangar was hit and set on fire.

Around half of the 15 Gloster Gladiators there were also lost. Of those that did manage to avoid the carnage and

get airborne, several fell victim to marauding Messerschmitts and others were lost the next day.

At Nivelles, the recently-delivered Fiat CR.42s had been ordered to disperse to Brustem (also known as St Truiden) and they began to depart at 0445. As they approached their new home 20 minutes later the biplane pilots spotted enemy aircraft, but they were ordered to land immediately. Patrols were later flown locally and several Fiats were shot down.



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

Fiat CR.42 No.6 being examined at Brustem by Luftwaffe personnel. Note the Bf 109 parked behind.



WREAKING HAVOC

This devastation was inflicted all over the country and, as the Luftwaffe flew almost unhindered over Belgium in the early afternoon, a reconnaissance aircraft was seen over Brustem. This resulted in an order for all aircraft to be dispersed under trees near the perimeter to provide cover.

Before this could be achieved, a pair of Bf 109s swept in to strafe, damaging two of the Fiats on the

ground. This presaged an attack by the Junkers Ju 87 'Stukas' of I/StG 2 that proceeded to wreak havoc on the exposed aircraft, and 14 Fiat CR.42s were wrecked. Only those hidden under the trees survived.

It had been a dreadful day during which the Aéronautique Militaire had been completely emasculated. Belgium was not alone, these scenes were repeated at airfields all over Holland and France. ☠

"Stukas proceeded to wreak havoc on the exposed aircraft, and 14 Fiat CR.42s were wrecked."

LUFTWAFFE UNIT STRUCTURE

Staffel

Plural - Staffeln. Smallest combat flying unit, normally of nine aircraft. Denoted using Arabic numerals. RAF equivalent would be a squadron.

Gruppe

Plural - Gruppen. Comprising three (later four) Staffeln plus a Stab (headquarters or staff) flight. Denoted using Roman numerals: eg, I, II, III. Thus 3/JG 20 would be the 3rd Staffel of Jagdgeschwader 20. RAF equivalent would be a wing.

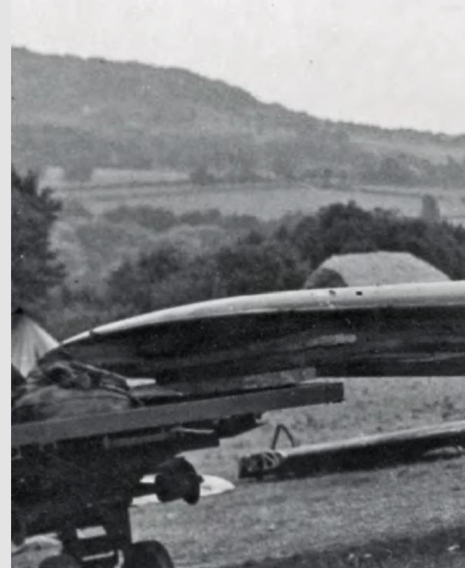
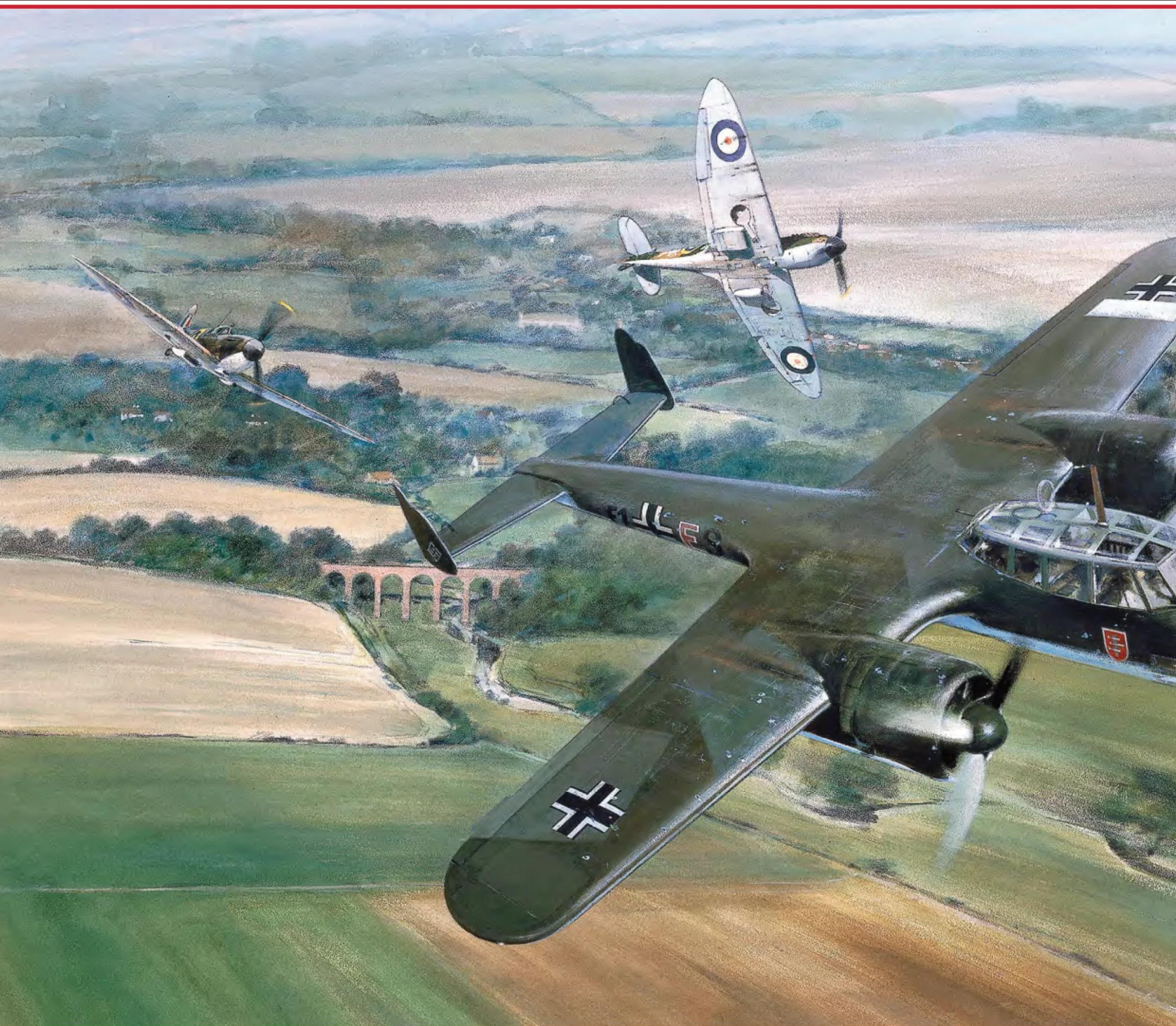
Geschwader

Plural is *also* Geschwader. Comprising three (later four) Gruppen plus a Stab (headquarters or staff) flight. Denoted using Arabic numerals: eg, 1, 2, 3. Thus I/JG 20 would be the 1st Gruppe of Jagdgeschwader 20 and Stab/JG 20 would be its headquarters flight. Geschwader were usual given a prefix relating to their role - see the other table for details. RAF equivalent would be a group.

Note: To use the full designation, I/JG 20 *should* be presented as I./JG 20, as a full stop behind a number in German is the equivalent of 1st in English. To keep things simple, the full stops have been omitted in this publication.



Shattered remains of a CR.42s of 3ème Escadrille at Brustem. ALL IMAGES CLAUDIO POLIDORI VIA PAOLO VARRIALLE UNLESS NOTED



DOWN

on the farm

AVIATION ARTIST GEOFF NUTKINS RECREATED A SHOOT DOWN THAT OCCURRED CLOSE TO HIS HOME

“**T**hey attacked us from behind. Trying to take evasive action by flying up and down, they hit us with three bursts with the result that we only had limited power from the engines.” So spoke Fw Rolf Heitsch of 8/KG 76 after he had recovered from the trauma of being shot down by Spitfires, a forced landing in the Kent countryside and capture by his enemies.

It was September 15, 1940 and the Dornier slithered to a halt at Castle Farm near the village of Shoreham in Kent just after noon. Nobody could have known then, but those 24 hours marked the turning point in the struggle between the Royal Air Force and the Luftwaffe, and would be commemorated thereafter as Battle of Britain Day. (See page 86 for more.)

Feldwebels Heitsch, Pfeiffer, Sauter and Schmid formed the crew of Dornier Do 17Z ‘F1+FS’, part of a large raid by KG 76 aiming for London’s dockland. The bombers were met by massed formations of Hurricanes and Spitfires and, as the Germans turned for home, they began to take a severe mauling.

Heitsch and his comrades found themselves at the rear of their

formation – terribly vulnerable. Fg Off John Dundas and American Plt Off Eugene ‘Red’ Tobin latched on to the Dornier and took turns to attack. The uneven contest brought the Dornier down low, its crew hoping upon hope that by some miracle they could cross the coast and take their chances with the Luftwaffe’s efficient and tenacious air-sea rescue service.

Dundas and Tobin continued to harass the bomber as it flew at low level through the countryside, the health of its engines decaying by the mile. Inevitably, physics took over and all that remained was to choose which field to bring the Dornier down in. As such things go, it was a superb piece of flying, ‘F1+FS’ remained remarkably intact.

Fw Schmid had died, but the other three crew members were quickly taken into custody by the ‘Home Guard’ and police. The Castle Farm Dornier was one of six Do 17s of KG 76 that did not return to base that day.

‘Red Tobin’ shot past at low level to inspect 609 Squadron’s handiwork. When 609 Squadron’s intelligence officer was happy with the claims; Tobin’s share in this Dornier was the first *confirmed* victory by an American flying a Spitfire.

Left

Geoff Nutkins has created two superb images of a conflict that brought a Dornier Do 17Z to crash land a short distance from his home in Shoreham, Kent. ‘Height of the Battle’ shows Fg Off Dundas and Plt Off ‘Red’ Tobin on the tail of stricken ‘F1+FS’ on September 15, 1940.

COURTESY GEOFF NUTKINS - WWW.AVIARTNUTKINS.COM

Bottom left

Dornier Do 17s of KG 76 at low level.

Below

The Castle Farm Dornier attracted a lot of attention, particularly as the Spitfires had pursued it at low level over the Kent countryside.

BOTH JOHN WEAL
VIA ANDY THOMAS



"Inevitably, physics took over and all that remained was to choose which field to bring the Dornier down in. As such things go, it was a superb piece of flying, 'F1+FS' remained remarkably intact."



GEOFF NUTKINS - AVIATION ARTIST

Above
In the 'Castle Farm Dornier' - Geoff Nutkins depicted 'Red' Tobin flying past at low level as the crew of Dornier 'F1+FS' was taken prisoner.
COURTESY GEOFF NUTKINS -
WWW.AVIARTNUTKINS.COM



Geoff Nutkins has been painting aviation subjects for over 20 years. The son of a former 180 Squadron RAF bomber crewman, he grew up with a deep interest in the history of the air war over Europe. His chosen medium is gouache, a pigment based paint.

Geoff's paintings are displayed in collections throughout the world including the RAF Staff College, Cranwell, the RAF Museum Hendon and the RAF Club, Piccadilly, London. Geoff's talents as an aviation artist have produced many diverse and commended works, including the magnificent 'Scenes of the Battle of Britain' collection which raised over £100,000 in support of the RAF Benevolent Fund Reach for the Sky appeal in association with the *Daily Telegraph*.

Geoff is an Associate of the Guild of Aviation Artists, winning the much-coveted Nockold Trophy at the annual exhibitions in 1998 and 1999. Geoff's paintings frequently feature in *FlyPast* magazine and have been used as cover illustrations for a number of books. For more details of Geoff's work, limited edition prints, etc, take a look at: www.aviartnutkins.com

In addition to painting, Geoff is a keen aviation archaeologist and is the founder-member of the exceptional Shoreham Aircraft Museum in Kent. This is a superb museum based on an extensive number of aviation archaeology 'digs', all beautifully researched and presented. Exhibits include the cockpit section of a Junker Ju 88A and a Great War display. The museum is carrying out an ambitious project to erect memorials to honour the RAF Battle of Britain pilots who were killed in combat in crashes within a ten-mile radius. The tea room is exceptional! For details take a look at:

www.shoreham-aircraft-museum.co.uk

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SAMARITANS

WHEN IT WAS FOUND THAT THE LUFTWAFFE AIR-SEA RESCUE *or Spies?* SERVICE WAS ALSO ENGAGED IN RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS, ITS LUMBERING FLOATPLANES BECAME AUTHORISED TARGETS. **ANDREW THOMAS** EXPLAINS



Above
The first He 59 lost off the British coast fell victim to Spitfires of 72 Squadron from Acklington on July 1.
VIA J D R RAWLINGS

Right
An He 59 on the slipway at Schellingwoude, near Amsterdam.
H RING VIA C F SHORES

In marked contrast to the RAF, at the start of the Battle of Britain the Luftwaffe had a well-established organisation tasked with the recovery of aircrew from the sea. The Seenotdienst (Sea Rescue Service) comprised flying-boats, floatplanes and rescue boats backed by dedicated communications centres.

The main aircraft used was the Heinkel He 59 twin-engined biplane floatplane which first flew in 1931. The type made regular patrols from the outbreak of war from bases along the German coast.

Following the German conquest of Western Europe, operational rescue Staffeln, known as Seenotflugkommando (SNFIKdo), were detached to coastal bases in France and the Netherlands to cover operations against England. At the 'official' beginning of the Battle of Britain the five SNFIKdo had 33 He 59s and a single Dornier Do 24 flying-boat on strength.

There were no equivalent RAF units, though in August 1940 operational control of rescue launches passed to local naval control and a dozen Westland Lysanders were allocated to Fighter Command to search for ditched aircrew. An RAF air-sea rescue (ASR) organisation was not



established until 1941.

Although obsolescent, the He 59 had good seafaring qualities and was available in sufficient numbers to be the backbone of the Seenotdienst. The first major SNFIKdo rescue followed an attack on Wilhelmshaven by 24 Wellingtons on December 18, 1939, more than half of which were shot down. Rescue boats and He 59s from Hornum rescued 20 downed British airmen.

As operations spread into the southern North Sea after the Blitzkrieg in the west, the Heinkel seaplanes were painted white overall and carried prominent civilian registrations and red crosses on the wings and fuselage in anticipation of being given immunity.

FIRST BLOOD

In the early hours of July 1, 1940, Lt zur See Schroeder's He 115 floatplane, 'M2+CL' of 3/

LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



"Our plane was painted white with big red crosses. According to international agreements, we carried no armament on our search and rescue plane."



KüFlGr 106, minelaying off the northeast coast of England, was forced to ditch off Whitby. He 59D D-ASAM of SNFIKdo 3 was sent from Schellingwoude in Holland to search for the crew in what its headquarters regarded as a hazardous sortie.

Commanded by Lt Hans-Joachim Fehske, the Heinkel arrived in the search area soon after dawn, initially in misty conditions. They soon improved and, in excellent visibility, the aircraft turned south, unaware it had been detected and that a section of Supermarine Spitfires had been scrambled. Led by Flt Lt Ted Graham, Fg Off Edgar Wilcox and Flt Sgt Jack Steere of 'B' Flight, 72 Squadron,

took off from Acklington and shortly after 06:00 they spotted the intruder off Hartlepool near a coastal shipping convoy at 500ft (152m).

Fehske, the He 59's observer, spotted the Spitfires and remembered: "There were two British fighters behind us a few minutes later and very quickly we were shot down. Our plane was painted white with big red crosses. According to international agreements, we carried no armament on our search and rescue plane." The fire from the three Spitfires hit the floats and injured the radio operator, Uffz Stuckmann, and the Heinkel was forced to ditch.

Above
He 59B-3 D-ARYX, the prototype ASR conversion, reached SNFIKdo 2 on August 1, 1940.
VIA ALFRED PRICE

Below left
The crew of He 59E D-AFFK of SNFIKdo 4 spent an uncomfortable night on the wing of their aircraft awaiting rescue after being shot down on August 15. VIA CHRIS GOSS

Below
He 59C D-AG10 of SNFIKdo 1 in the sea after it was shot down over the western English Channel by an Anson of 217 Squadron on July 11.
VIA GRAHAM PITCHFORK



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



Above
The Seenotdienst also employed fast launches as part of its well-equipped ASR organisation.
VIA JOHN WEAL

Below
The crew of Hudson I T9303 VX-V of 206 Sqn from Bircham Newton shot down D-AFFK off Borkum. 206 SQN RECORDS

The crew took to their dinghy and were soon rescued by the sloop HMS *Black Swan*. Ted Graham recalled seeing it “coloured white with large red cross[es] on upper surface of upper plane”.

This action has been regarded as the ‘first blood’ of the Battle of Britain, although the ‘official’ date of the start was July 10.

Fg Off Wilcox also recalled the combat: “I delivered one attack and fired a burst of four seconds from dead astern. I observed incendiary bullets going into enemy aircraft [e/a].

“After breaking away I saw e/a jettison some small objects which I thought were small bombs. I then delivered a second attack and was just opening fire when e/a touched down on water; after one second burst I ceased fire.

“I continued circling e/a as it settled on water and started to sink. Rubber dinghy was launched with three occupants. I clearly saw red

crosses on the upper surfaces of top planes and the letters D-ASAM. A black Swastika on a red background was on the rudder.”

Despite the German observer’s protestations, there were genuine suspicions the Heinkel was conducting military activity by reporting shipping movements, in contravention of its red cross markings.

RED-HANDED

If there were any British doubts about the nature of the He 59s, they were allayed some days later. On the evening of July 9, bombers from Luftflotte 2, with Messerschmitt Bf 110s of III/Zerstörergeschwader 26 ‘Horst Wesel’ (ZG 26), mounted a strong attack on a convoy as it transited the English Channel; six aircraft were posted missing.

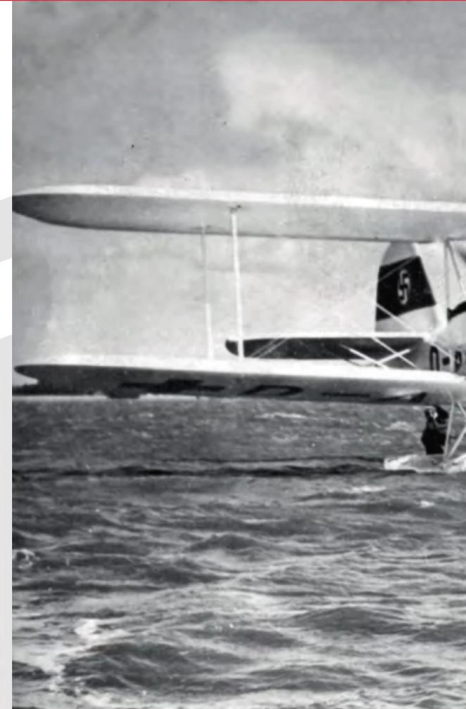
Several He 59s of SNFIKdo 1 were launched from Boulogne with an escort of Bf 109s from II/JG 51 to search for the missing crews. The

convoy was meanwhile covered by a section of Spitfires from 54 Squadron led by Flt Lt Al Deere.

When He 59C-2 D-ASUO ventured too close to the ships, Plt Off Johnny Allen peeled off to attack the unfortunate biplane which force-landed on the Goodwin Sands just south of Deal. It was Allen’s seventh and last victory: he was shot down and killed later in the month.

Fw Maywald, Uffz Andres, Schiele and Bartmann were all captured and their white-painted, red cross-marked floatplane was towed ashore and beached at Deal. When D-ASUO was examined it was discovered that the pilot’s log showed the position and direction of British convoys. This was assessed as reconnaissance, not rescue work, and reinforced the suspicion that the role was not purely humanitarian.

Sir Hugh Dowding, AOC Fighter Command, was in no doubt and considered that military aircraft



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



rescuing downed airmen could not legitimately be marked with a red cross. Indeed, the 1929 Geneva Conventions were quite specific: "Aircraft used as means of medical transport shall enjoy the protection of the Convention during the period in which they are reserved exclusively for the evacuation of wounded and sick and the transport of medical personnel and material.

"In the absence of special and express permission, flying over the firing line, and over the zone situated in front of clearing or dressing stations, and generally over all enemy territory or territory occupied by the enemy, is prohibited."

COMMUNIQUÉ 1254

While the intelligence gleaned from the capture of D-ASUO was being assessed there was a further incident on the morning of July 11, 1940. An Avro Anson of 217 Squadron from St Eval, flown by Flt Sgt Nelson Webb and crew, encountered He 59 D-AGIO wearing red crosses 20 miles (32km) south of Start Point, Devon, close to the convoy the Anson was escorting.

Shortly after 10:00 Webb's crew attacked and both gunners – Plt Off Swift and Sgt Botha – opened up, firing a considerable amount of ammunition and forcing the Heinkel onto the sea. The Anson's

wireless operator, AC Holiday, sent off a sighting message just as the German crew took to their life raft, a Royal Navy destroyer picking them up. Webb received the DFM soon afterwards.

After due consideration of the evidence garnered over the preceding weeks, Communiqué 1254, issued on July 14, 1940, said: "Enemy aircraft bearing civil markings and marked with the red cross have recently flown over British ships at sea and in the vicinity of the British coast, and they are being employed for purposes which His Majesty's Government cannot regard as being consistent with the privileges generally accorded to the Red Cross.

"His Majesty's Government desire to accord to ambulance aircraft reasonable facilities for the transportation of the sick and wounded, in accordance with the Red Cross Convention, and aircraft engaged in the direct evacuation of the sick and wounded will be respected, provided that they comply with the relevant provisions of the Convention.

"His Majesty's Government are unable, however, to grant immunity to such aircraft flying over areas in which operations are in progress on land or at sea, or approaching British or Allied territory, or territory in British occupation, or British or Allied ships. Ambulance aircraft

which do not comply with the above requirements will do so at their own risk and peril."

The message was reinforced by an Air Ministry statement on July 29 saying the tasks conducted were: "not consistent with the privileges generally accorded to the Red Cross".

The Germans vehemently protested on the basis that rescue aircraft were covered by the Geneva Convention. With typical bellicosity Winston Churchill later responded: "We did not recognise this means of rescuing enemy pilots who had been shot down in action, in order that they might come and bomb our civil population again."

ARMED AND CAMOUFLAGED

Attacks on civil marked rescue aircraft continued, particularly if they were in the vicinity of Allied shipping, and the Seenotdienst eventually ordered rescue aircraft be armed and camouflaged. Civil registrations and red crosses were also abandoned.

The Heinkels had been supplemented by former Dutch Navy Do 24Ns D-AEAV and D-APDA which joined SNFIKdo 1. Initially white overall with red crosses, they were also later armed and camouflaged.

The RAF was not long in implementing the new policy ➤

Above left
A red cross-marked He 59 conducting a simulated rescue for the benefit of the cameras in the spring of 1940. BUNDESARCHIV

Above
Plt Off Edward Crew of 604 Squadron opened his combat tally with the destruction of an He 59 in mid-Channel. E D CREW

"We did not recognise this means of rescuing enemy pilots who had been shot down in action, in order that they might come and bomb our civil population again' - Churchill."

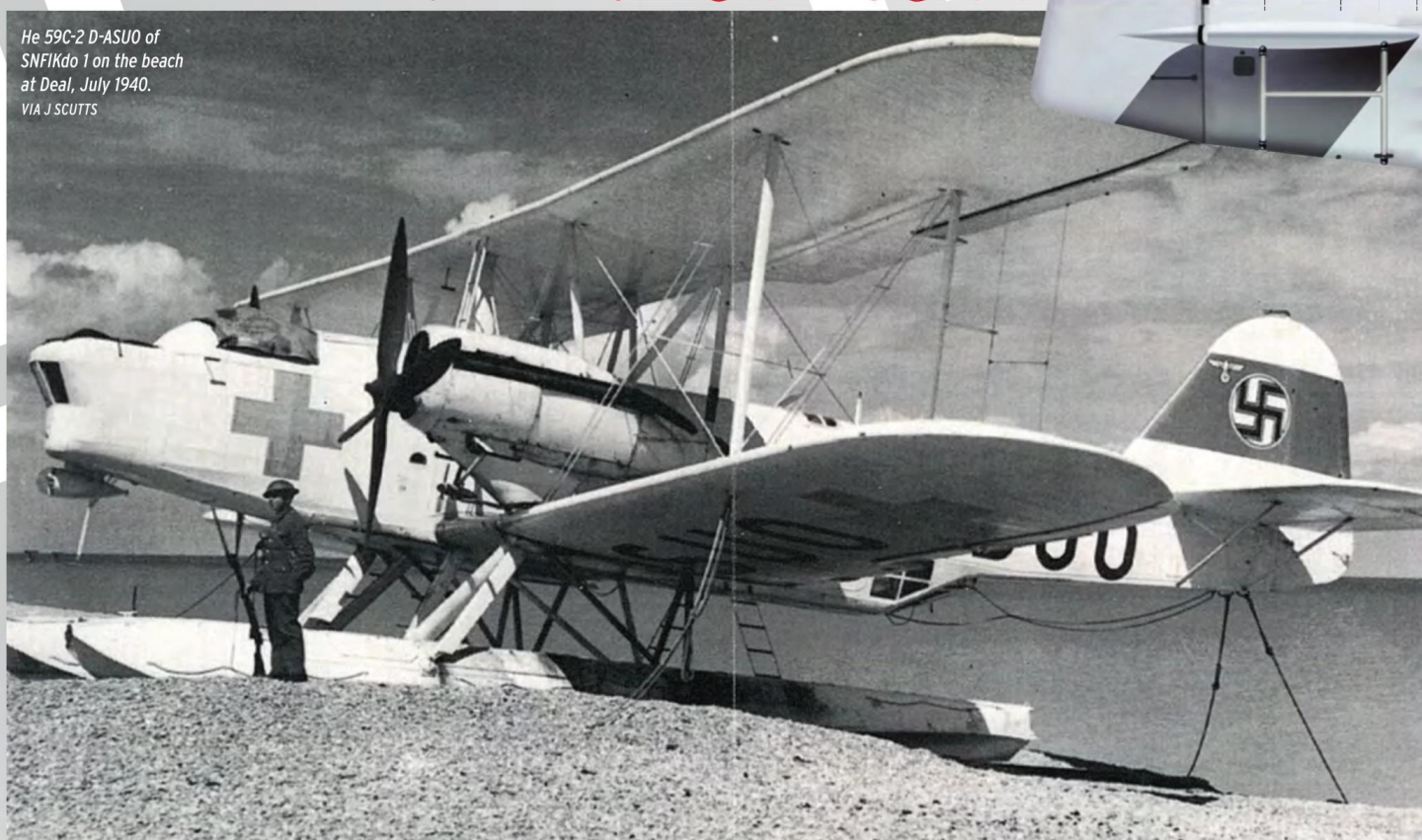
RED CROSS

PETE WEST PROFILES THE HEINKEL HE 59

WHICH WAS CAPTURED ON JULY 9, 1940

Rescuers

He 59C-2 D-ASUO of
SNFIKdo 1 on the beach
at Deal, July 1940.
VIA J SCUTTS



Heinkel He 59s D-AGUI
and D-ASUO in June 1940.
VIA JOHN WEAL

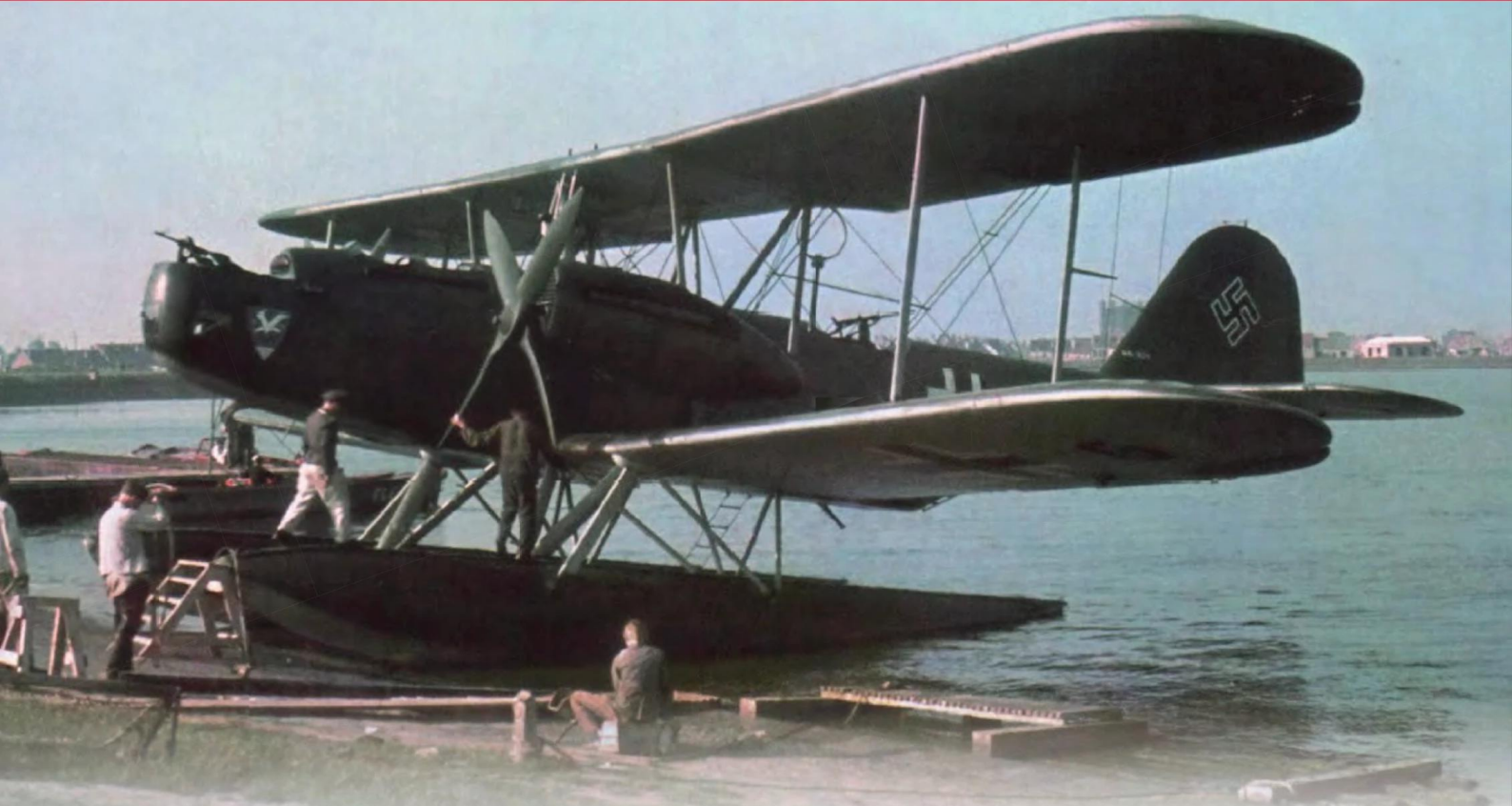
LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



Heinkel He 59C-2 D-ASUO of Seenotflugkommando 1 (SNFKdo 1) was launched from Boulogne on July 9, 1940 to search for missing Luftwaffe crews in the English Channel. The floatplane was engaged by Plt Off Johnny Allen of 54 Squadron and it force-landed on the Goodwin Sands, just south of Deal. Fw Maywald, Uffz Andres, Uffz Schiele and Uffz Bartmann were all captured and their white-painted, red cross-marked Heinkel was towed ashore and beached at Deal. PETE WEST © 2015



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



Above
After Communiqué 1254 in July 1940, the ASR He 59s were camouflaged and armed.
H RING VIA C F SHORES

Below right
Sqn Ldr Harold Fenton, 238 Squadron's CO, was shot down while attacking an He 59 on August 8.
VIA M GOODMAN

as, shortly after 15:00 on July 20, Hawker Hurricanes of 238 Squadron's 'Green' section, escorting a convoy south of the Needles, off the Isle of Wight, encountered an He 59 at 1,500ft.

Plt Off Jack Urwin-Mann wrote of the encounter: "I saw a completely white plane south of the convoy and went to investigate. I identified [it] as an He 59 (seaplane) and dived to attack, making the first from astern and above. The starboard engine completely stopped with the propeller still. The e/a was then dead on the waterline about 3 miles from the French coast... The e/a looked completely white with black crosses on fuselage and main planes and entire rudder."

While this was claimed only as a 'probable', the aircraft and crew of SNFIKdo 4 were lost. The body of its pilot, Fw Herbert Degel, was washed ashore in France a month later.

LEGITIMATE TARGETS

That the Heinkels were indeed armed was brutally brought home three hours later as Convoy BOSOM sailed east under steady attack. Defending fighters shot down a number of enemy aircraft

and the Germans mounted more ASR searches.

Near the convoy at 06:00, Fg Off Joseph Haworth of 43 Squadron spotted an He 59 south of the Needles. As he dived to attack, the floatplane's gunner hit his Hurricane, P3964, forcing Haworth to bale out into the sea, where he drowned. The seaplane escaped into cloud.

Little over an hour later a section of 601 Squadron Hurricanes flown by Fg Off Tom Hubbard (in P3358), Plt Offs Michael Doulton (aircraft serial unknown) and Tom Grier (in P3783) encountered an He 59N of SNFIKdo 1 south of Selsey Bill.

Hubbard was the first to attack. "I sighted a white object close to water 10 miles south of convoy at approximately 19:20. On investigation it turned out to be a Heinkel 59 seaplane painted white with red crosses and markings D-AKAR flying south at 120mph at 100ft. I circled the machine, at which it turned toward me, and radioed description of machine to the controller, who instructed me to shot it down if hostile."

The Hurricanes attempted to force the biplane towards the English coast – and initially it complied

but then turned south. Hubbard continued: "I fired a further burst and then watched while *Green 2* and *3* shot [the] machine down in flames. No return fire was experienced, and burning oil was the only remains on the water... We landed at 19:40 having taken off at 18:05."

"As he dived to attack, the floatplane's gunner hit his Hurricane, P3964, forcing Haworth to bale out into the sea, where he drowned."



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

The Heinkel crew were seen to bale out but were too low for their parachutes to open. Thereafter, the Luftwaffe directed that, whenever possible, rescue flights were to be given a fighter escort.

UNKNOWN PLOT

Seenotdienst aircraft went unmolested for the next week until the evening of July 27 when a patrol of Hurricanes from 615 Squadron was landing at Hawkinge. They had been covering Convoy BACON in the Channel as a series of storms had passed through the area.

As the fighters were about to touch down they were diverted to investigate an unknown 'plot' off Deal. The radar contact proved to be an He 59 of SNFIKdo 3 flying just above the water, 10 miles northeast of Dover, presumably on a rescue mission.

Piloting P3109, Sqn Ldr Joe Kayll led the six Hurricanes down on the hapless floatplane, as the unit records describe: "Fg Off Collard and Plt Off Madle attacked, rear gunner of e/a fired at them, some smoke came from the e/a. The e/a took evasive action by diving and turning from 500ft to sea level. *Red 1* [Kayll] then attacked from dead astern closing to 100 yards, the e/a burst into flames and *Red 2* [Plt Off Hugo] had one burst into the e/a which crashed into the sea. The e/a was white with large red cross[es] on top of wings, red band on fuselage, red cross on fin or rudder."

The storms having passed, in the early afternoon of July 28 a large raid was detected approaching Dover and several sharp dogfights between Bf 109s of JG 51 and Spitfires of 74 Squadron ensued. He 59s were sent over the area and at 13:05 Plt Off Robert Wilson of 111 Squadron



spotted He 59N 1851 D-ASUC of SNFIKdo 3. In concert with Sgt Jim Robertson, he attacked, forcing the floatplane down west of Boulogne with two of its crew dead and the other three wounded.

Fifteen minutes later the Hurricane pilots of 111 sighted another Heinkel, D-AROO, on the sea, apparently rescuing the survivors of the ditched aircraft. They attacked and left it severely damaged, though the survivors of both aircraft were rescued.

MOUNTING LOSSES

With increasing losses over the Channel, on July 30, 1940 the whole of SNFIKdo 3 was ordered to move immediately to Boulogne to support the forthcoming air assault on England. Along with others based in Cherbourg, the unit continued to operate in conjunction with rescue launches to locate and pick up downed crews.

On the early afternoon of August 8

during battles over Convoy PEEWIT, both the RAF and the Luftwaffe had suffered losses. They included two Hurricanes of Middle Wallop-based 238 Squadron, one of which was the unit's CO, Sqn Ldr Harold Fenton, who took off in P2947. Flying over a sea littered with oil and floating debris, at 13:50 he saw an He 59 low over the water and dived to attack.

In his memoir Fenton recalled: "I spotted a German seaplane at sea level. I went down to attack, gave him a long burst but, being much faster, I overshot and his gunner must have got in a lucky one which cut an oil pipe. My windscreen was covered in black oil. I turned north but shortly afterwards my engine seized. Having so little height, I had to ditch rather than bale out."

He managed to put down near the trawler HMT *Basset* and was picked up, injured. He later returned to duty with 238.

August 11 was a day of heavy combat and the He 59s were

Above

One of the swastikas under the gunner's cockpit of a Blenheim IVf of 236 Squadron represents a Breguet Bizerte flying-boat shot down by Plt Off Graham Russell (right) and gunner, Sgt Eric Pert (left) on November 6. The observer in the centre is Sgt Ken Hutchings. E PERT

Below

Flying Blenheim If L6728 of 604 Squadron, Plt Off Edward Crew shared in the destruction of an He 59 on August 11.

M J F BOWYER



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



Above
Flt Lt Rupert Clerk of 79 Squadron shot down an He 59 on August 28.
VIA MARK POSTLETHWAITE

ordered out in force. One took off from Calais and had barely set out on patrol when it was spotted over the Channel by patrolling Spitfires of 610 Squadron. Flt Lt Brian Smith, flying

X4166, dived in and shot it down, but the Bf 109 escort intervened and Sgts Tanner and Neville were killed.

Meanwhile the station commander at Middle Wallop launched a pair of Bristol Blenheim IIs of 604 Squadron, flown by Sqn Ldr Anderson (in L6774) and Plt Off Edward Crew (L6728) – with an escort of Spitfires from 152 Squadron – to search for his missing aircraft. The use of the Blenheims was indicative of the ad hoc nature of ASR in the RAF during 1940.

Two small ships were located off the French coast, as Edward Crew recalled: “We were on an air-sea rescue search, escorted by Spitfires. We were then detached to investigate a report of an enemy seaplane and found it to be an He 59 in the sea some 30 miles from the coast with engines running. We dived down and opened up, setting it on fire. In the area there were two small German ships.” Crew’s first success was an He 59 of Seenotzentrale Cherbourg.

ADLER TAG

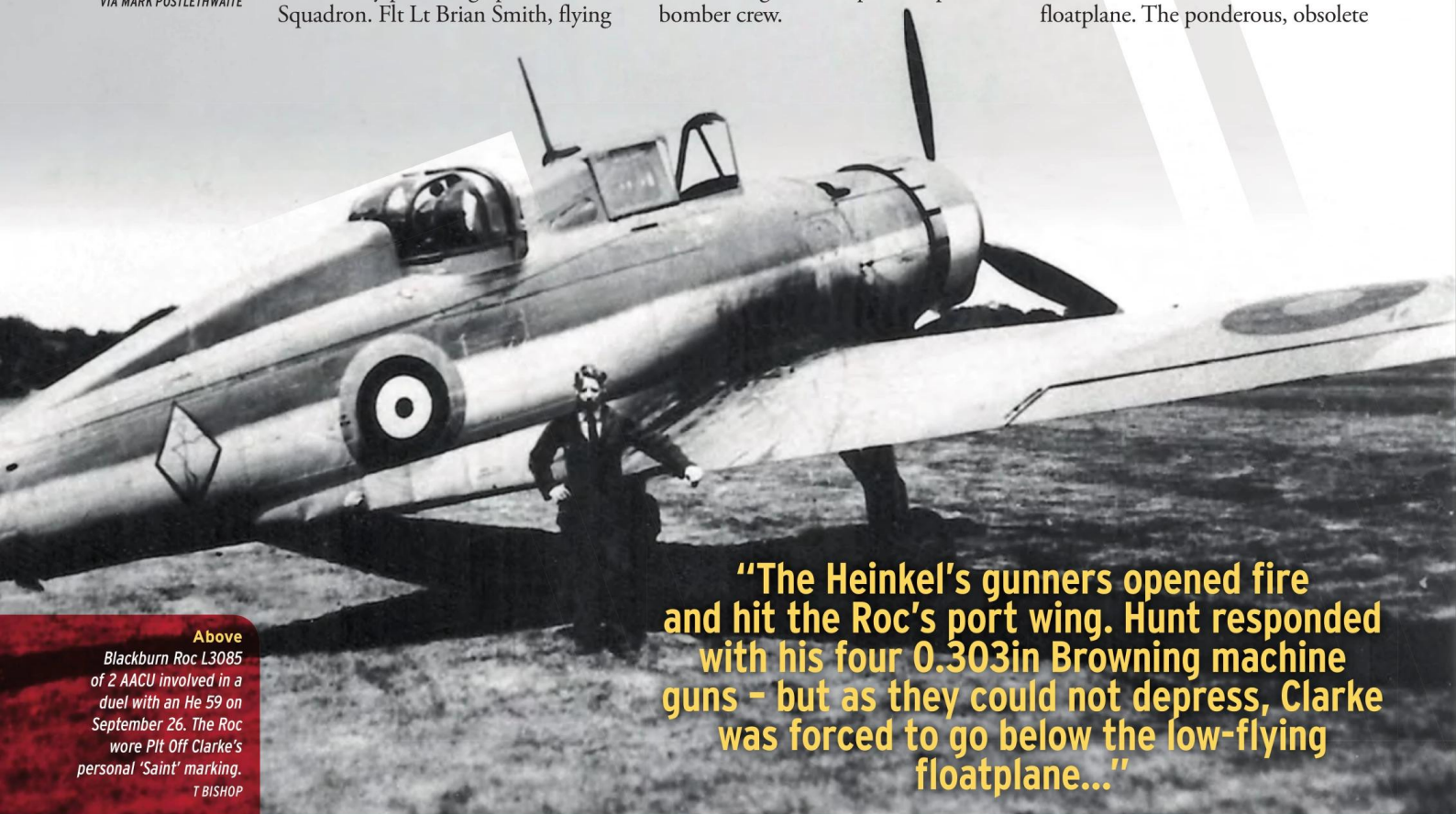
Seenotdienst floatplanes were active elsewhere over the North Sea and on August 15, 1940 – the so-called Adler Tag (Eagle Day) – an He 111H of KG 26 was shot down by fighters and ditched off the Durham coast. Patrolling for such an eventuality was He 59E 2606 D-AFFK of SNFIKdo 4 which alighted and picked up the bomber crew.

Off the island of Borkum, D-AFFK was spotted by the crew of Lockheed Hudson I T9303 of 206 Squadron and shot down into the sea. Lt zur See Siegfried Bömer was killed, the survivors climbing onto the wing. During an attempted rescue in rough sea, Do 24N D-APDA from Norderney was itself badly damaged. After a cold and uncomfortable night on the wing, a Kriegsmarine (German Navy) minesweeper arrived, but had to wait for the hulk of the Heinkel to drift out of a minefield before it could affect a rescue.

Further south, the steady stream of attacks over southern England continued. On August 20, an SNFIKdo 3 He 59 was damaged when taking off after a rescue in mid-Channel.

Rescue patrols continued over the next few days but one ran into trouble on the evening of August 26 when He 111s of KG 55 attacked Portsmouth. They were repulsed, with heavy losses, and He 59s of SNFIKdo 2 were despatched to look for the missing crews. At 19:15 one was observed flying at about 20ft by a pair of Spitfires from 602 Squadron flown by Fg Off Donald Jack and Plt Off Paul Webb.

The unit’s history described the action: “This time their target was interesting. They found it, low over the water, 20 miles south of St Catherine’s Point; an He 59 floatplane. The ponderous, obsolete



“The Heinkel’s gunners opened fire and hit the Roc’s port wing. Hunt responded with his four 0.303in Browning machine guns – but as they could not depress, Clarke was forced to go below the low-flying floatplane...”

Above
Blackburn Roc L3085 of 2 AACU involved in a duel with an He 59 on September 26. The Roc wore Plt Off Clarke’s personal ‘Saint’ marking.
T BISHOP

LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

He 59s were used by the Luftwaffe to rescue downed airmen in the Channel. Further up the coast they flew in silver, with red crosses prominent – down in 602's sector, they were in full camouflage.

"They reported on shipping positions, and coastal installations – and they were escorted by Messerschmitts, which were definitely not on errands of mercy. In a fast attack Paul Webb put the Heinkel down for good, and the two Spitfires made good their escape before the '109s could pounce." Lt zur See Mietlin and his crew were posted missing.

Before the month was out two more Heinkels had fallen to RAF fighters. In the late morning of the 28th, Flt Lt Rupert Clerk in a 79 Squadron Hurricane shot one down in mid-Channel, wounding the crew. A few minutes later a quartet from 79 led by Plt Off George Nelson-Edwards despatched 1528 of SNFIKdo 3.

Intensive Luftwaffe attacks continued into September as did rescue sorties. For example, the crew of a ditched Do 18 flying-boat of 3/KüFlgGr 406 was picked up by an He 59 on the 3rd. Four days later came the first major assault on London – after which He 59 0840 'DA+WT' of SNFIKdo 3 landed in the sea off Dungeness to conduct a rescue but was itself damaged by the rough seas and wrecked. Its crew was rescued.

Having landed and rescued a pilot from mid-Channel on the 14th, He 59 1513 'TV+HO' had to force-land near Boulogne and was lost in the waves, although all on board were saved. Another was lost after alighting the following day – September 15, which is now remembered as Battle of Britain Day.

STRANGE ENCOUNTER

An attack on the Spitfire factory at Woolston, Southampton, in the late afternoon of September 26 saw significant losses on both sides. The Luftwaffe's efficient ASR service He 59s were soon out looking for downed airmen.

On the British side, a Blackburn Roc turret fighter of 2 Anti-Aircraft Co-operation Unit, flown by Plt Off 'Nobby' Clarke, was also ordered to search south of the Isle of Wight. In the increasing gloom, Clarke and gunner Sgt Hunt searched over the grey sea, noting an aircraft in the distance. Puzzled by its appearance and apparent size, Clarke closed – and seeing its

camouflage and large black crosses realised it was German.

The Heinkel's gunners opened fire and hit the Roc's port wing. Hunt responded with his four 0.303in Browning machine guns – but as they could not depress, Clarke was forced to go *below* the low-flying floatplane-which began running for France, and safety. Time and time again the faster Roc passed the seaplane, Hunt firing brief bursts.

The He 59 was hit, but its gunners were also damaging the Roc. As the French coast approached, a frustrated Clarke was forced to break off and head for Gosport. Short of fuel, he landed at 19:40, the Roc's Perseus engine expiring soon after.

The enemy fire had been accurate and ten hits were found on the Roc, including two unexploded incendiary rounds in the fuel tank. In his combat report, Clarke made a claim for one He 59 damaged. The incident was certainly among the strangest of the Battle of Britain.

END OF THE 'BATTLE'

Heinkel crews faced hazards other than the RAF and rough seas. On October 2, 1940, He 59 'NO+FU' force-landed, only for its crew to discover they were in a minefield. Taking to the dinghy, they struck a mine and Lt Phillip Barbinger, Ofw Neiss, Gefr Brandt and Fw Horr were killed.

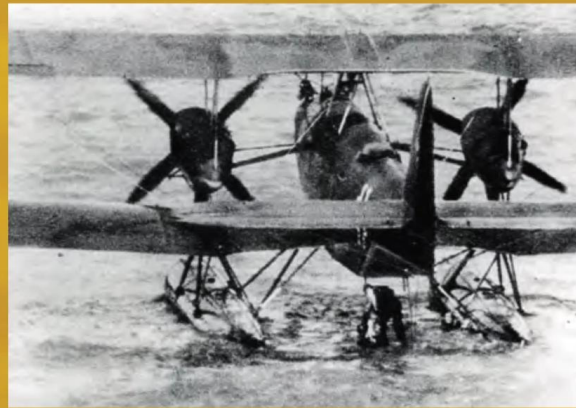
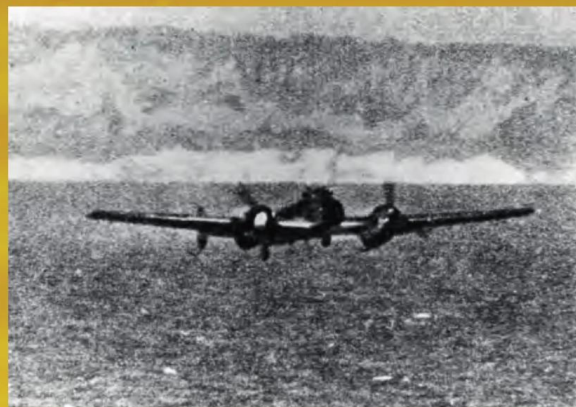
In the early hours of the 8th, intelligence picked up indications of a Luftwaffe aircraft down in the Channel. At 06:20 three Blenheims from 235 Squadron were sent out, and in patchy fog two of them spotted Lt zur See Stelzner's 0534 'TW+HH' of SNFIKdo 2 southwest of St Catherine's Point.

Plt Off John Fenton recalled: "I fired... at 150 yards. The rounds hit the engine." The He 59 dropped towards the water, returning fire as it dived. Plt Off Henri Gonay, a Belgian, moved in, hitting the engine again and the biplane hit the sea and capsized. Siegfried Stelzner, Uffzs Karl Hirschmann Helmuth Fischer and Karl Wischer were all killed.

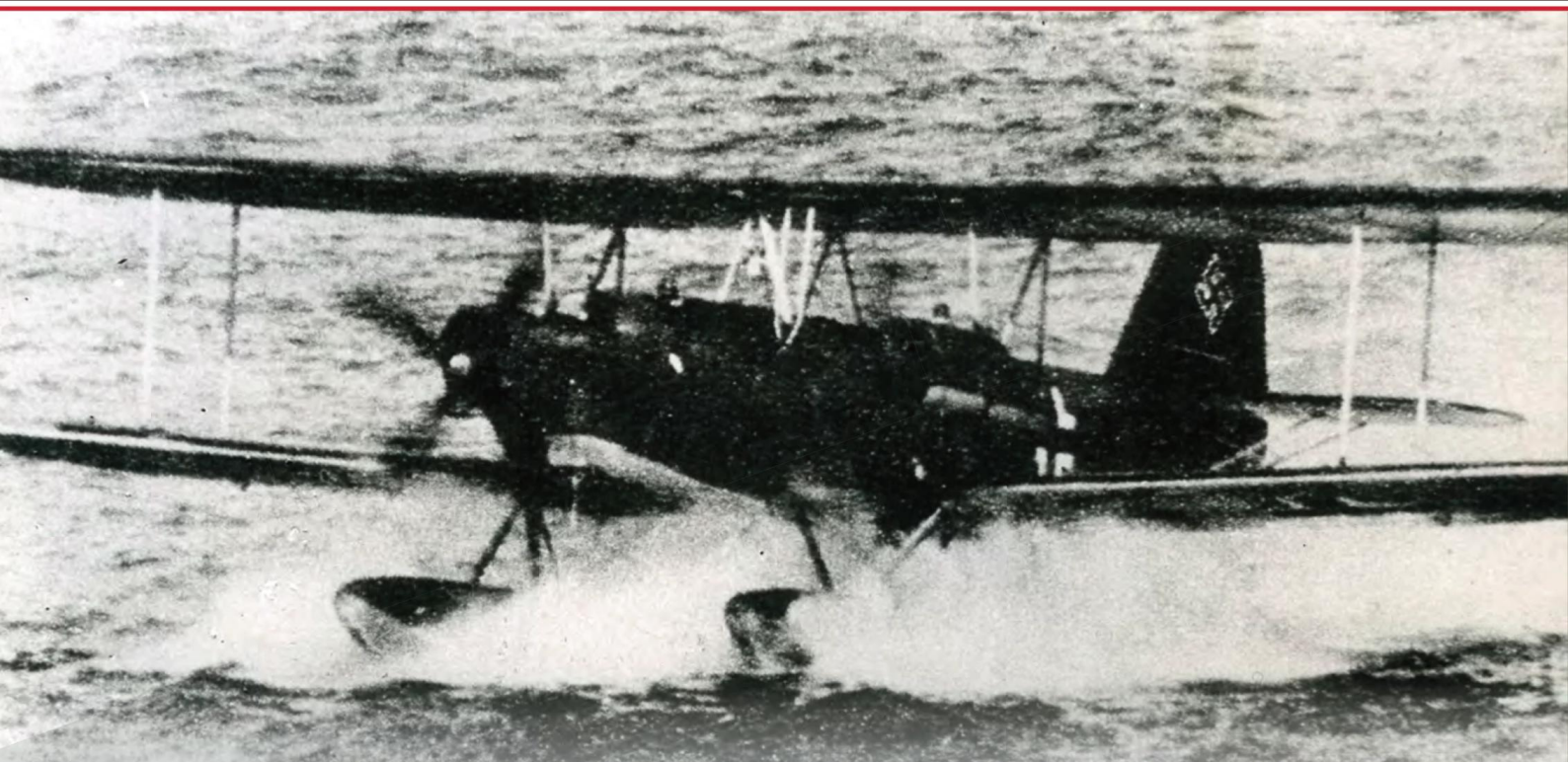
Meanwhile in Blenheim *V-for-Vic*, another Belgian, Plt Off Leon Prevot, sighted a second He 59. This was 0541 'DA+MJ', captained by Lt zur See Bernhardt Schulz, which also came under fire. Schulz attempted to escape by flying at just 20ft above the sea, his rear gunner exchanging fire.

A long burst from the Blenheim silenced the Heinkel's return fire and a thickening trail of smoke ➤

IN NEED OF A SAMARITAN



An amazing sequence showing a Messerschmitt Bf 110C, thought to be from III/ZG 76, ditching in the Channel on September 25, 1940 – probably after combat with 607 Squadron Hurricanes south of the Isle of Wight. Having survived the ditching, the crew (circled) had a fair expectation of rescue. An He 59 managed to pick them up and take them to safety. IMAGES: VIA JOHN WEAL



"Eventually Pat Wells... set the port float on fire and the enemy aircraft landed perfectly into wind. It gradually burnt until the petrol tanks went up and covered it and the sea around with burning petrol. I think all the crew were dead or badly wounded."

Above
Camouflaged He 59
'unsticking' after a
rescue. VIA JOHN WEAL

appeared before it crashed into the sea in a welter of spray. Schulz, Fw Nicolai Bridi, Ogfr Karl Kampf and Uffz Stargnet were killed.

The last He 59 to fall to the RAF during what is now recognised as the period of the Battle of Britain fell to the Hurricanes of 229 Squadron in a costly action on October 26. Just before mid-day a trio of fighters led by 21-year-old Fg Off Geoffrey Simpson in W6669 spotted He 59 1984 off Boulogne, flown by Lt Heinrich Wilke and crew. Sgt Rupert Ommanney shot it down, killing Wilke, Gfr Wolfgang Michels and Uffz Karl Backmaier.

Retribution was swift, as escorting Bf 109s jumped the Hurricanes, sending Simpson into the sea to his death. They also shot down V6704, flown by Plt Off D B H McHardy who became a prisoner of war. Only Ommanney returned to Northolt.

ADOPTING NEW TYPES

Such regular losses led the Luftwaffe to acquire other aircraft for rescue work, including a small number of Breguet Br 521 Bizerte flying-boats from the Vichy French Navy. One of them, '5G+FM' of SNFIKdo 1, flown by Ofw Ulrich Janke, was engaged in early November by a Blenheim IVf of 236 Squadron flown by Fg Off Graham Russell.

Sgt Eric Pert, the Blenheim's gunner, recalled: "We got caught in a box barrage over Brest... We also flew over an enemy convoy and shot down its escorting Dornier 24 [sic] and passed an Me 110 returning from Falmouth – we ignored each other! – and returned full of shrapnel holes and with our observer badly wounded... My pilot, who had previous success, was awarded the DFC."

Another He 59 was caught over the Thames estuary that month by Hurricanes of 249 Squadron. In his diary Plt Off George Barclay recorded: "In the afternoon we did a convoy patrol in pretty bad weather. We found an enormous 'Hun' seaplane [the He 59B had a span of 97ft], low on the water.

"It did steep turns to the right while we tried to shoot it down. It turned so sharply that a stern attack turned into a head-on attack. I got its port motor, and it had to do its turns to the left, turning against its dead engine.

"Eventually Pat Wells... set the port float on fire and the enemy aircraft landed perfectly into wind. It gradually burnt until the petrol tanks went up and covered it and the sea around with burning petrol. I think all the crew were dead or badly wounded."

FOURTEEN-MINUTE VICTORY

Despite the Luftwaffe turning more and more to night attacks, ASR by armed and camouflaged Heinkel He 59s continued. As dusk fell on November 26, 1940 Flt Lt 'Orange' O'Meara in a Hurricane of 421 Flight attacked what he identified as an 'He 60' – it was an He 59.

O'Meara explained: "The presence of an He 60 and its fighter escort approaching Dungeness was given to us by the 'Y' Service unit at Capel le Ferne direct by telephone link, instead of going through the usual route via the sector control at Biggin Hill. I remember being in an awful hurry and took off in the nearest aircraft available.

"I arrived in the area plotted by 'Y' and found the Heinkel without much difficulty. I never really thought about the possibility of a fighter escort, and went for it from the beam. I watched it fall into the sea and then raced back. I recollect that I had been in the air for only 14 minutes."

The Heinkel had been searching for Fw Adolf Rosen of IV/JG 51 who had been shot down earlier in combat with 66 Squadron. For the Seenotdienst floatplane crews, the Battle over Britain was over. It had been a long and bloody campaign. +

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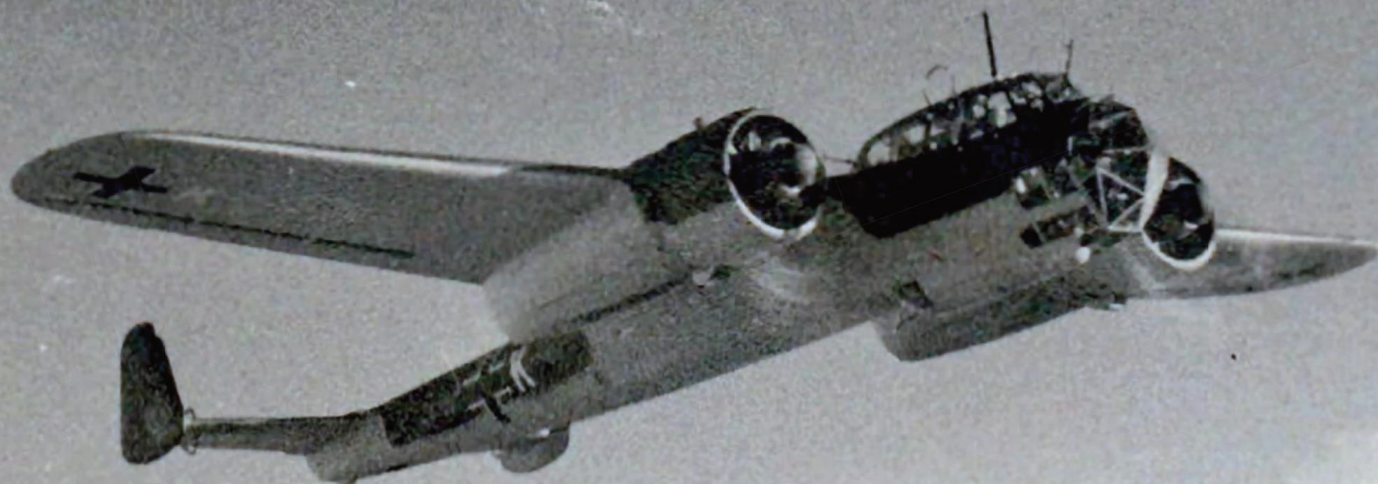
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JUST

TASKED WITH DESTROYING RAF FIGHTER *Another Day*
COMMAND'S AIRFIELDS, ON AUGUST 26 THE LUFTWAFFE TURNED
ITS ATTENTIONS TO SOUTHEAST ENGLAND.

CHRIS GOSS RELATES THE ACTION

Above
A Do 17 Z of 7/KG 3.

Above right
Günther Lützow, left.

Rather than approach their targets over land, on August 26, 1940 most of the bombers approached over the Thames Estuary, turning north or south as required.

Just before midday, a small number of Dornier Do 17s of III/KG 3, based at St Trond in Belgium, lifted off from their airfield. Their target was an airfield west of Ramsgate – Manston. The small formation of German bombers had a massive escort with *at least* the whole of JG 3 to look after them; the fighters were led by recently-appointed Geschwader Kommodore, Hptm Günther Lützow.

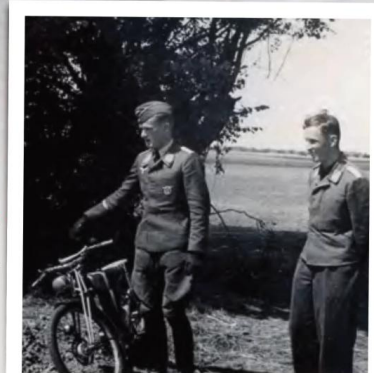
As the formation approached the Kent coast and prepared to turn southwards, Hurricanes of 56 Squadron (North Weald), Spitfires of 610 and 616 Squadrons (Biggin Hill and Kenley respectively) and Defiants of 264 Squadron (Hornchurch) tried to intercept. It was 264's task to attack the bombers.

POINT-BLANK RANGE

Two days before, 264 had been badly mauled by Luftwaffe fighters, losing five aircraft, one of which was flown by their popular squadron commander, Sqn Ldr Philip Hunter. At exactly the same time as the German escort lifted off from their bases, seven Defiants, led by Flt Lt Arthur Banham, got airborne.

Instructed to patrol over Dover, the Defiants were then vectored towards the Herne Bay/Deal area to intercept 12 Do 17s. Mindful of the German escort fighters, they successfully came underneath the Dorniers and attacked. In the ensuing confused combats, 264 Squadron claimed to have destroyed six Do 17s and damaged another.

Plt Off Des Hughes with his gunner, Sgt Fred Gash, tore into one bomber which burst into flames, but was not seen to crash. Going after a second, they saw the nose of their target break away, the hulk diving away with bits falling off it. Again, it was not seen to crash.



Plt Off Harold Goodall and gunner Sgt Bob Young tackled another Dornier "with an overtaking beam attack at 250 yards and got in two fairly long bursts; the Do 17 immediately lost speed and came towards me when my gunner got in two fairly long bursts at point blank range. Pieces fell from the starboard engine which burst into flames.

"Just as the machine went into a dive, one of the crew baled out. I saw the machine go down in flames. I immediately attacked another Do 17 which had broken formation and my gunner got in a short burst which appeared to hit. I then saw the Do 17 dive into cloud and lost it."

Flt Lt Ernest Campbell-Colquhoun and his gunner, Plt Off Gerald Robinson, carried out several passes on the Dornier formation, seeing one aircraft break formation with a smoking starboard engine before the pair were forced to return to base with jammed guns.

LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

TURN OVER AND FALL OUT

Flt Lt Arthur Banham and Sgt Barrie Baker along with Sgts Edward Thorn and gunner Fred Barker were quickly in the thick of the action, Banham recalling: "When approaching Dover at 12,000ft, we sighted 12 Do 17s in 'vics' line astern. We approached on starboard side in two vics line astern and I opened fire at [the] leading bomber of the last section.

"I saw my gunner get in a long burst at 100 yards; I then broke away and turned towards the leading section and got a long burst in at 100 yards on No.2 of first section. I was then hit myself near the cockpit and my machine was on fire. I lost control and telling my gunner to jump as I turned the aircraft on its back. I fell out and was picked up in the sea."

The Defiants had been spotted by the Stab/JG 3 while the remainder of JG 3 were tied up with the single-seat RAF fighters. In quick succession, Hptm Lützow and his Geschwader Adjutant, Oblt Friedrich-Franz von Cramon, accounted for three Defiants.

One was Banham's, whose gunner was reported missing. The second was

crewed by Fg Off Ian Stephenson and gunner Sgt Walter Maxwell. Like Banham's, Stephenson's Defiant crashed into Herne Bay – Maxwell also being reported missing. Another flown by Plt Off Harold Goodall, returned slightly damaged.

FULL THROTTLE

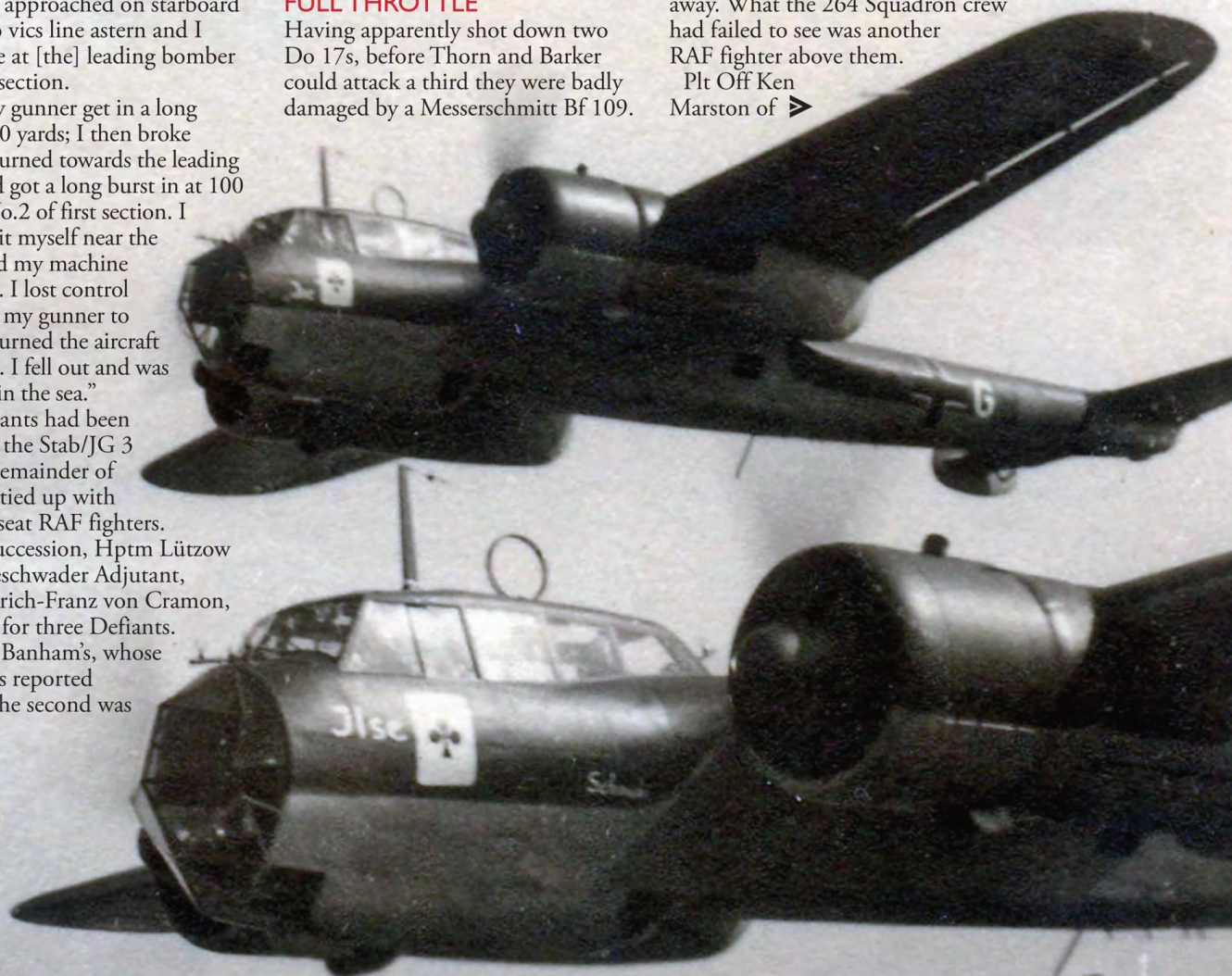
Having apparently shot down two Do 17s, before Thorn and Barker could attack a third they were badly damaged by a Messerschmitt Bf 109.

Spinning away to attempt a forced-landing near Herne Bay, they were hit by another German fighter when they were at 500ft (152m) and about to land.

Despite the Defiant being ablaze, Barker was able to open fire and saw the German fighter crash a few fields away. What the 264 Squadron crew had failed to see was another RAF fighter above them.

Plt Off Ken Marston of ➤

Below
Dorniers of 7/KG 3 in formation.



"Two days before, 264 had been badly mauled by Luftwaffe fighters... Mindful of the German escorting fighters, they successfully came underneath the Dorniers and attacked."

FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



Above
Sqn Ldr Philip Hunter
(left) briefing pilots of
264 Squadron.

Below
Edward Thorn and Fred
Barker with their Defiant
and mascot.

56 Squadron had been scrambled to intercept the German formation coming from the northwest. Spotting a lone Bf 109 at 2,000ft below him, he dropped his Hurricane in behind, got in a short burst and saw the radiator and cowling fly off.

The Luftwaffe pilot rolled his fighter onto his back and Marston could see his head and shoulder out of the cockpit, but he then lost the

German fighter in cloud. His victim is believed to have been Uffz Willi Finke of 4/JG 3 who was killed when his fighter crashed near Reculver.

As Marston flew back to base he spotted a burning wreck in a crater southwest of Westgate-on-Sea, which matches Finke's crash site. But Marston had not finished for the day:

"The first thing I saw was another Me 109 on the tail of a diving Boulton



Paul Defiant. I dived with full throttle and got about 70 yards behind the Me 109 at a height of 50ft.

"I gave him a short burst and saw flames appear from beneath the cockpit. The Me 109 crashed about 100 yards behind the Defiant which had force-landed wheels-up. The crew... got away from their machine and were picked up by an army tender. The position of the crash was approximately five miles south of Reculver Church near Herne Bay."



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



"Spotting a lone Bf 109 at 2,000ft below him, he dropped his Hurricane in behind, got in a short burst and saw the radiator and cowling fly off."

Thorne and Barker were reported to have crash-landed near Chislet, south of Reculver, where the Bf 109 of Uffz Fritz Buchner of 6/JG 3 also crashed.

'WHO GOT WHAT'

The Defiant squadron's part in the raid was over and the German bombers headed for home, albeit with fewer than had taken off. All the losses came from 7/KG 3 which would indicate this attack was probably made by just one Staffel.

One Do 17Z, coded '5K+ER', crashed into the sea off Foreness. The pilot, Lt Karl Eggert, was rescued but died in captivity two days later. Radio operator Ogfr Kurt Ramm and gunner Ogfr Walter Knochenmuss were both killed and the observer, Uffz Rudolf Haupt, captured.

Do 17 '5K+GR' ditched in the Channel on the return run, killing the pilot, Lt Heinz Sachse. Another landed at Merville low on fuel and with wounded crew – believed to be Uffz Horst Pässler, Gf August Meyer and Uffz Heinz Henning.

There was one more: Do 17Z-2 1160 '5K+AR' – salvaged for the RAF Museum in June 2013. Separated from the formation by RAF fighters and badly crippled, it crashed onto the Goodwin Sands: Fw Willi Effmert (pilot) and Uffz Hermann Ritzel (observer) were the only two survivors.

Uncertainty still remains as to 'who got what' on this day as no combat report for 264 Squadron mentions seeing a Do 17 crash. Only one other claim for a Dornier was filed and even that doesn't help.

Fg Off Peter Lamb of 610 Squadron reported taking on a Do 17 heading south off Deal. Despite damaging it he did not see it crash but reported that its pilot was later rescued from the sea. (This *could* have been Fw Willi Effmert.)

Also involved in the bitter fighting with JG 3 were 56, 610 and 616 Squadrons, which could possibly have had a part to play.

CLAIM AND COUNTER-CLAIM

As well as the two aircraft shot down by Ken Marston, other Bf 109 claims were: 56 Squadron – one destroyed; 610 – three destroyed and two 'probables'; 616 – one destroyed. RAF losses were heavy: in addition to those suffered by 264 Squadron, 56 lost two Hurricanes, 610 two Spitfires and 616 seven Spitfires.

German claims (in addition to the three Defiants claimed by Stab/JG 3) were: two Hurricanes and two Spitfires for I/JG 3; five Spitfires and one Hurricane for II/JG 3; and three Spitfires for III/JG 3. The only losses were one fighter damaged in 3/JG 3, three destroyed in II/JG 3 and one damaged in 8/JG 3.

August 26, 1940 was just another day in the Battle of Britain. But for the combats around midday and shortly afterwards just off the Kent coast, confusion still remains. It is clear the German claims were far more realistic than the RAF. ☛

Above left
Dornier '5K+AR' of 7/KG 3.

Above
An unidentified 7/KG 3 crew.

Below left
Bf 109Es of I/JG 3 under camouflage netting.



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS

DESTROYING

ANDREW THOMAS RELATES HOW HERMAN GÖRING'S CONCEPT OF THE HEAVY FIGHTER WAS CRUSHED DURING THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

A Myth



When it entered service, the Luftwaffe described the elegant yet formidably armed Messerschmitt Bf 110 as a heavy fighter or Zerstörer – 'Destroyer'. It was intended to dominate the airspace deep in enemy territory allowing unhindered offensive action.

The sleek Messerschmitt twin captured the imagination of the Luftwaffe's bombastic head, Generalfeldmarschall Herman Göring and under his patronage the creation of heavy fighter units forged ahead. It was at Göring's insistence that the three Zerstörer Gruppen then in service flew in the Polish campaign but they really gained their laurels during the invasions of Scandinavia, France and the Low Countries in the spring of 1940.

FATAL WEAKNESS

In these theatres the Bf 110s were largely operating in conditions of German air superiority. This

masked the fatal weakness of the Zerstörer, namely its size, lack of agility and poor acceleration. There is no doubt that the Bf 110 was a formidable opponent, but in the skies over England its flaws were brutally exposed. Pitted against an established air defence system and well-flown, well-armed single-engined fighters, the myth of the Zerstörer was shattered.

By the 'official' start of the Battle of Britain on July 10 the Luftwaffe had almost 250 serviceable Bf 110s available to the nine Zerstörer Gruppen. Both confidence and expectation were high. By the end of the Battle on October 31 it is assessed that over 220 had been destroyed.

On the day the Battle 'began' Lt Kuhlrich and his gunner of III/ZG 26 were shot down over a convoy off Dungeness, Kent, in mid-afternoon by two Hawker Hurricanes of 56 Squadron flown by Flt Lt 'Jumbo' Gracie and Sgt Whitehead. This



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

was the only '110 that was actually lost during the day, despite RAF fighters claiming five destroyed and a similar number damaged. It was nonetheless an ominous portent of things to come.

ESCORTING THE ESCORT

On September 7, at the personal insistence of the now



Reichsmarschall Göring, the Luftwaffe launched its first intentional attack on London, to some extent relieving the pressure on the Fighter Command airfields. Almost 1,000 aircraft, over a third of them bombers, set out in late afternoon, the escort including the Bf 110s of I and II Gruppe of Zerstörer Geschwader 2 (I and II/ZG 2).

Among the fighters that rose in defence of the capital were the Supermarine Spitfires of 609 Squadron. One of these was R6691, flown by 28-year-

old Flt Lt Frank Howell, and his unit had been ordered to patrol between Northolt and Brooklands at 20,000ft (6,100m).

At around 6pm, Howell encountered a large formation of Bf 110s, one of which he attacked. His camera gun film is testament that he very likely destroyed it.

Escorting bombers to London should have been the perfect role for Göring's vaunted Zerstörer. The reality was that the big twin-engined fighters were themselves having to be chaperoned by the much shorter ranged, if more agile, Bf 109s. ✈



Clockwise from opposite left

The first Bf 110 to be shot down during the Battle fell to Flt Lt 'Jumbo' Gracie of 56 Squadron.

VIA ANDREW THOMAS

Flt Lt Frank Howell of 609 Squadron. YAM

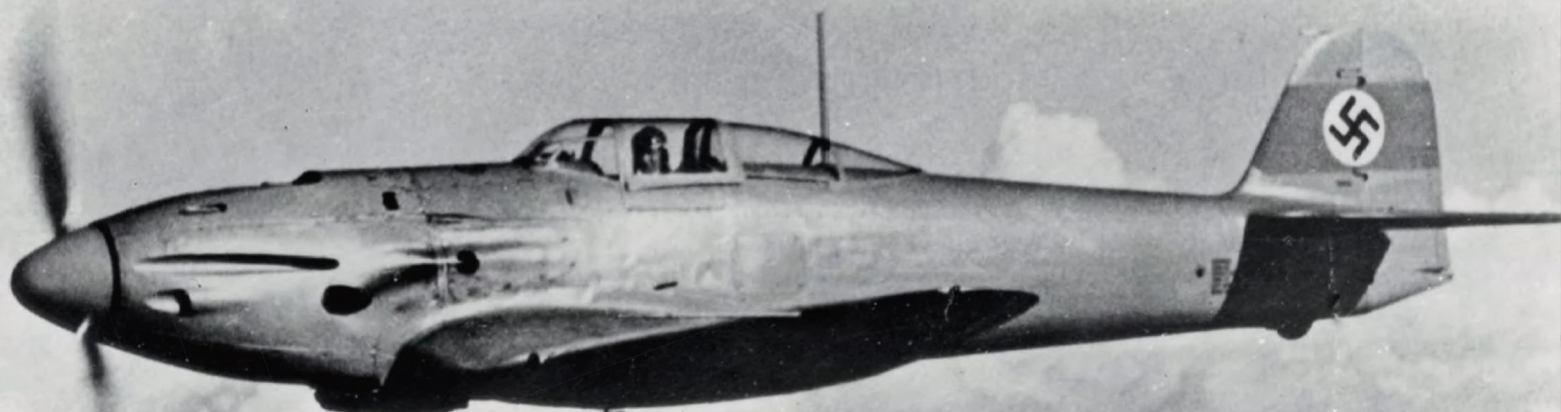
A Bf 110 desperately trying to evade the fire of Flt Lt Frank Howell's Spitfire on the evening of September 7, 1940. YAM

Bf 110C '3U+EP' of 6/ZG26 that Lt Hans-Joachim Kästner crash-landed at Newchurch on August 18 after being hit over Ashford by Plt Off Down of 56 Squadron.

VIA ALFRED PRICE



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



H O O K, L I N E

and sinker

DURING THE SUMMER OF 1940 RAF PILOTS REGULARLY REPORTED COMBATS WITH A GERMAN FIGHTER THAT DID NOT EXIST. **TOM SPENCER** EXPLAINS



Top
One of the original He 112s that saw limited service in Spain and with the Luftwaffe. KEY COLLECTION

Above
A poster publicising the capture of the speed record in March 1939. VIA AUTHOR

“I then dived away from the bombers and ran into several He 113s. I attacked these and saw one burst into flames after a three-second burst from astern and directly above, using just over full deflection.”

That was how Flt Lt Terry Webster, the experienced 24-year-old ‘B’ Flight commander of Hornchurch-based, Spitfire-equipped 41 Squadron, described his 13th and final victory. Webster’s action had taken place shortly after 10:00 on September 5, 1940 when the Battle of Britain was at its height.

His action against ‘Heinkel He 113s’ was just one of a number of claims made against the elegant-looking single-seat fighter through the summer. RAF Intelligence had been reporting the He 113 as being in Luftwaffe service and issued estimated performance and recognition silhouettes, the latter adorning the walls of RAF briefing rooms.

The reality was that *all* the single-engined fighters encountered over southern England were Messerschmitt Bf 109s. The presence of another type of fighter was merely a result of German propaganda and misinformation!

RECORD-BREAKER

The enigmatic aircraft was actually the Heinkel He 100, the prototype

of which had first flown on January 22, 1938, followed by two more. In the hands of Ernst Udet, He 100V-3 D-IDGH captured the 100km (62-mile) closed-circuit speed record of 394.6mph (635km/h) on June 6, 1938. This was considerably faster than the Bf 109 then entering Luftwaffe service as its standard single-engined day fighter.

The record was claimed by a type referred to as the ‘Heinkel He 112U’ and, as no photographs were issued, it was assumed to be a variant of the existing He 112 unveiled the previous year at the Zurich International air event. The type had been in limited combat service with the Spanish Nationalist Air Force.

The mysterious ‘He 112U’ again hit the headlines on March 30, 1939. Flown by Heinkel test pilot Hans Dieterle, the type gained the absolute world speed record by clocking an average of 463.92mph. The record was eclipsed the following month by the specifically-designed Messerschmitt ‘Me 209’.

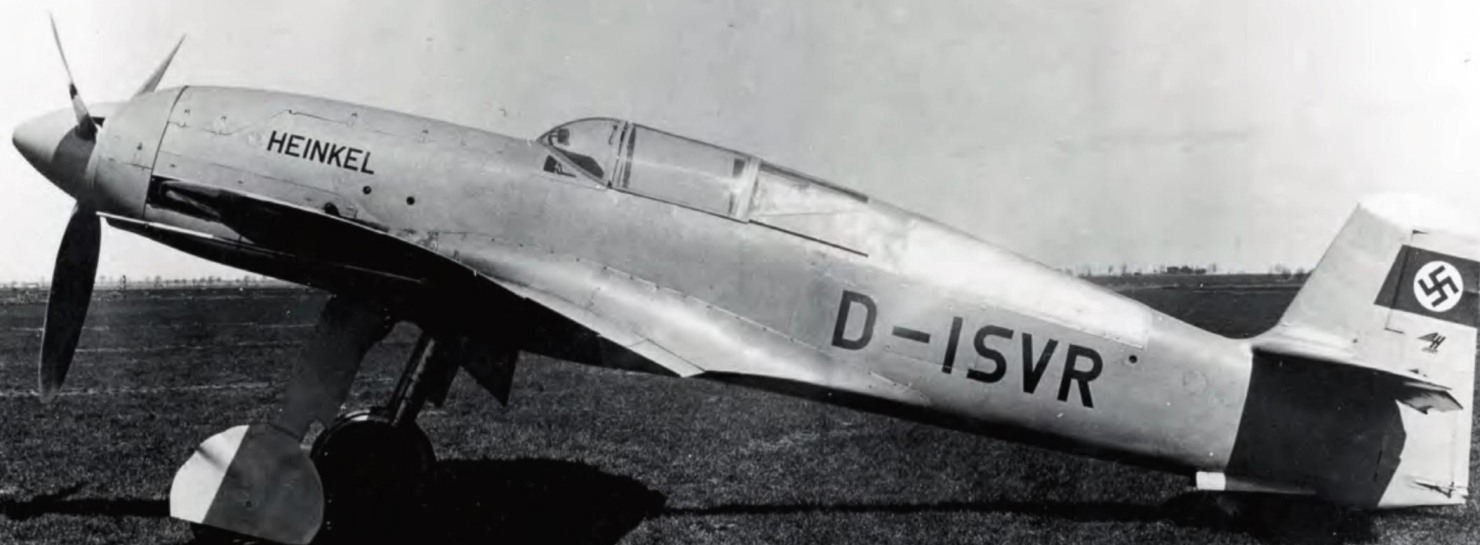
With the news of Dieterle’s achievement, photographs of the ‘He 112U’ were released. In reality it was He 100V-8 D-IVSR, specially modified for the record attempt. It was evident to foreign air intelligence analysts that this was a new design and bore no lineage to the rather ponderous-looking He 112. ➤

LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



Above
He 100D-1s masquerading for the cameras as He 113s
at the Heinkel airfield at Marienehe. B ROSMÜLLER

FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



“With the internationally recognised performance of the ‘He 112U’, the propaganda ministry saw an opportunity for mischief – and an elaborate hoax on Allied Intelligence ensued.”

926/8 447

SECRET. FORM "F".

COMBAT REPORT.

Sector Serial No.	(A)
Serial No. of Order detailing Patrol.	(B)
Date.	(C) ... 27/7/40 ...
Flight, Squadron	(D) Flight .. B ... Squadron. 41 ..
Number of Enemy Aircraft.	(E) ... Three ...
Type of Enemy Aircraft.	(F) ... He. 113's ...
Time attack was delivered.	(G) ... 18-00 Hours approx.
Place attack was delivered.	(H) ... 5 Miles off Dover.
Height of Enemy.	(J) ... 7,000 Feet.
Enemy Casualties.	(K) Confirmed 4 ¹ Crashed in Sea.
	Destruction. Unconfirmed ... 1 He 113 ...
Our Casualties... Aircraft.	(L) ... NIL ...
	Personnel. (M) ... NIL ...
Searchlights.	(N) (i) ... Nil ...
A.A. Guns Assistance.	(ii) Yps. A.A. and Ballons at Dover.
Fire from Fighters.	(P) Range opened 200 Yards.
	(Measured or estimated). Length of burst Short Burst.
	Range closed ... 50 Yards.
	No. of Rounds per gun. 150 ...
General Report.	(R)

Top
He 100V-1 D-IVSR after
being brought up to a
standard approximating
to the He 100D-1.
KEY COLLECTION

Above
Flt Lt Terry Webster,
who claimed an He 113
destroyed. WEBSTER FAMILY
VIA STEVE BREW

**Right and
opposite top left**
RAF combat report from
July 1940 identifying
opposing fighters
as He 113s.
VIA AUTHOR

POLITICAL INTERFERENCE

Despite the lack of official interest, Heinkel persisted with its sleek fighter. Following an extensive redesign the troublesome surface evaporation engine cooling system was replaced with a more conventional semi-retractable ventral radiator; and wingspan was increased. The result became the pre-production He 100D-0 – and the He 100D-1 which entered limited production.

Powered by a 1,020hp (760kW) Daimler-Benz DB-601M liquid-cooled engine, the He 100D had a maximum speed of 416mph and a range of 550-plus miles. It was armed with a pair of 7.9mm MG 17 machine-guns and a single 20mm MG FF/M cannon.

LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

Fire from Fighters.....(P) Range Opened.....200 Yards.....448
 Length of Burst.....Short Burst.....
 Range Closed.....50 Yards.....
 No. of rounds per Gun.....150.....

General Report.....(R) Whilst leading Green Section 41 Squadron on patrol over Dover, I saw bursts of A.A. Fire from the shore batteries, and aircraft diving down on the Harbour. I called Green and Blue Sections to follow me down. I then followed the aircraft down in a steep dive, but did not get in range until the enemy aircraft flattened out about 50 Feet above sea level. I then fired two short bursts at about 150 Yards. The enemy aircraft flew straight into the sea. I then saw a further H.E. 113 being attacked by a Hurricane ?. This aircraft, H.E. 113 came down on the sea. I was then about 8 Miles from the French Coast. On the way home at about 20 Feet I was attacked by a further H.E. 113, the combat consisted of a series of very tight turns at 50 Feet, I fired three short bursts with no apparent effect, then broke off the combat as I was approaching the French Coast.

I returned to Manston at 1830 Hours.

Sgt. J. Webster. F/Lt.
John Webster F/Lt. OC 112



Left
 Plt Off 'Ben' Bennions claimed an He 113 probable as his final combat success.
 BENNIONS FAMILY

Its performance eclipsed the Bf 109's, a limitation that was to cost the Luftwaffe dear in the summer of 1940. However, there remained little interest on the part of the Reichsluftfahrtministerium (air ministry - RLM) as, under a rationalisation programme, Heinkel was to concentrate on bombers and Messerschmitt on fighters.

So Heinkel sold the six surviving prototypes to the Soviet Union and the three pre-production

'D-0s to Japan, together with a manufacturing licence. During 1939 Heinkel produced a dozen production-standard He 100D-1s which remained at the Marienehe factory near the Baltic port of Rostock rather than entering Luftwaffe service.

On the outbreak of war the 'Ds replaced some He 112s flown by Heinkel test pilots for the local defence of the factory. At this stage there were no incursions into

eastern Germany and so they were never called to action.

OPPORTUNITY FOR MISCHIEF

With the internationally recognised performance of the 'He 112U', the propaganda ministry saw an opportunity for mischief - and an elaborate hoax on Allied Intelligence ensued. In early 1940 the He 100D-1s at Marienehe were painted in current Luftwaffe ➤

Below
 The 'man in the moon' marking on an He 113 lent credence to the German claim it was in service with a night-fighter unit.
 VIA M GOODMAN



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



The popular magazine *Der Adler* even said the He 113 had proved itself in combat during the invasions of Denmark and Norway. Information on the new type was also published in the British magazine *The Aeroplane*, and the March 1940 edition of the official aircraft recognition manual, Air Publication 1764, included descriptions of the He 113.

TAKING THE BAIT

By the time German attacks on Britain began, meeting what was suggested might be a formidable new opponent was anticipated. One Hurricane pilot reported a combat with an He 113 over Dunkirk in May and so the deception was perpetuated.

Even such an august figure as Sir Hugh Dowding, the C-in-C of Fighter Command, recorded in a dispatch that the He 113 “made its appearance in limited numbers... its main attributes were high performance and ceiling”.

The first ‘confirmed’ victories seem to have been recorded during July and reports continued through September. Plt Off Eric Lock claimed one off Boulogne for his 15th victory: that such experienced pilots should report seeing the mythical Heinkel fighter is no surprise – intelligence staffs were reporting He 113s, so they were prominent in the minds of aircrew.

Above

Pilots flying Spitfire Is with 41 Squadron made a number of claims against He 113s between July and October 1940.

VIA J D R RAWLINGS

Right

The operationally marked He 100Ds also conducted air-to-air sorties as He 113s for the benefit of the camera in early 1940.

B ROSMÜLLER

Right

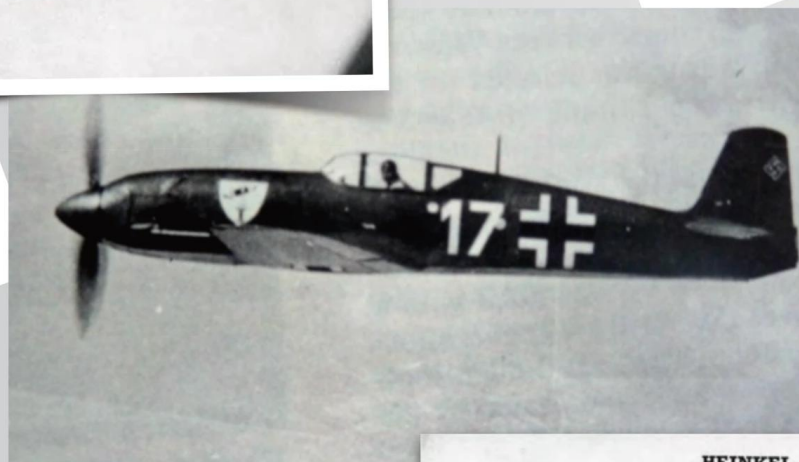
A page showing the He 113 in the RAF official recognition handbook API764.

VIA AUTHOR

Below

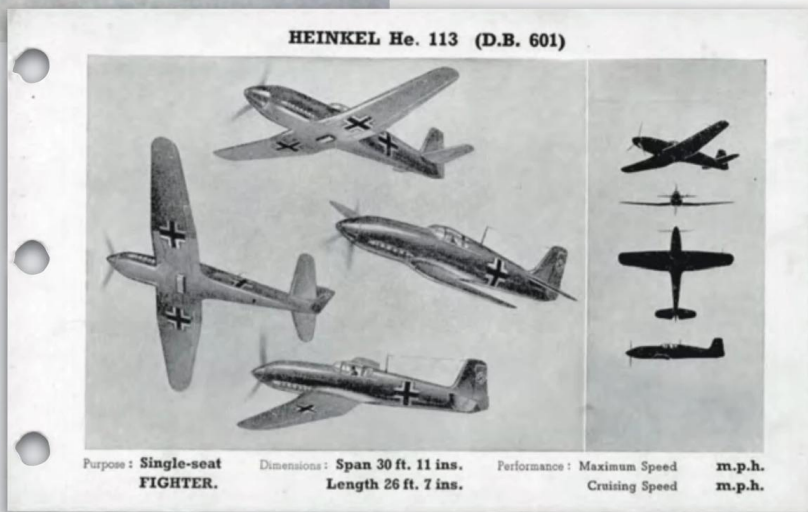
He 113 ‘White 8’ with the ‘Blitz’ Staffel marking.

VIA M GOODMAN



day camouflage and photographs were then taken in the air and the ground. They showed the aircraft wearing different, but fictitious, unit insignia and identity numbers.

A detailed series of photos was published and the new fighter was identified as the ‘He 113’ – logical as it bore a clear resemblance to the ‘He 112U’ record-breaker. The announcement stated the type was already in service with day and night squadrons and a fictitious insignia showing the ‘man in the moon’ seemed to support the latter assertion.



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



"Even such an august figure as Sir Hugh Dowding ...recorded in a dispatch that the He 113 'made its appearance in limited numbers... its main attributes were high performance and ceiling'."

GERMAN AIRCRAFT

HEINKEL He 113

Single-seat Fighter (1,500 h.p. Daimler-Benz DB 601H motor). Estimated speed about 400 m.p.h. at 19,000 feet.



GENERAL VIEW



Recognised by straight-tapered wings with rounded tips. Cylindrical pointed nose.



ENDS

In a whirling fight, especially if the aircraft encountered was painted differently from those previously experienced, the conclusion that it was a He 113 was reasonable.

SEEDS OF DOUBT

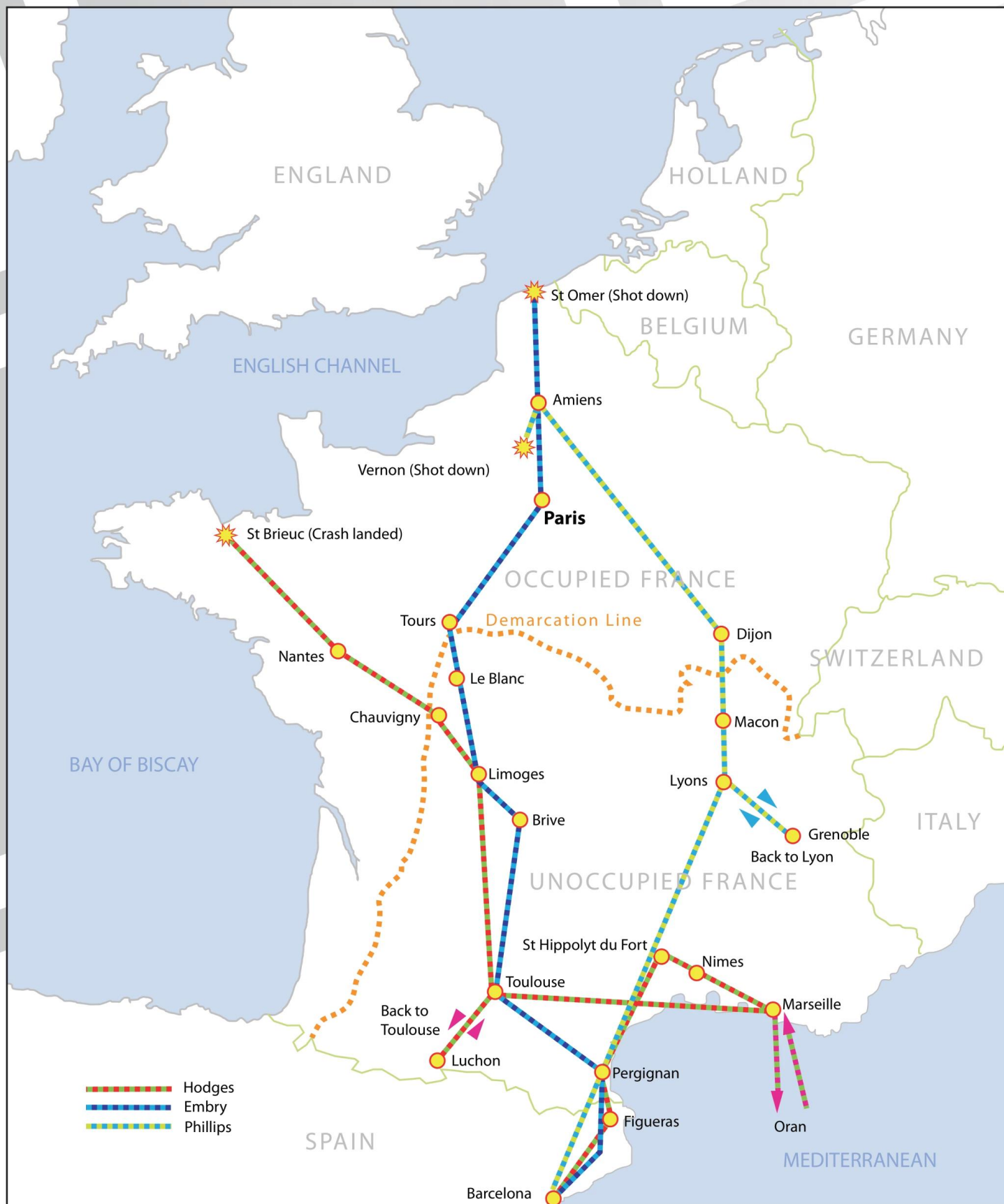
But its existence was beginning to be queried. All fighters recovered in France and over England had been Bf 109s – not one He 113, despite claims of the type being shot down. At the start of 1941 the British air attaché in Belgrade reported back to London on the He 113: "According to certain confidential information, this aircraft presumably does not exist."

Fortunately for the RAF, the only contribution this advanced design made to the war effort was as a tool for subterfuge, and it underwent no further development. Another far more deadly German fighter was being developed and when the Focke-Wulf Fw 190 appeared in the late summer of 1941, to the consternation of RAF fighter pilots, it was no fictional imagining of a propagandist. The 'Butcher Bird' had arrived. †

Above
He 100D-1s playing the role of He 113s at Marienehe with a badge of a dagger piercing a hat – one of three such 'Staffel' markings used.
B ROSMÜLLER

Left
He 113 recognition poster as displayed in Fighter Command crew rooms.
VIA AUTHOR

ON THE RUN



The routes taken by Embry, Phillips and Hodges as they turned evasion into escape. PETE WEST © 2015

LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

GRAHAM PITCHFORK DESCRIBES THREE OF THE FIRST 'HOME RUNNERS',
EVADING THE ENEMY TO RETURN TO THE FIGHT



Left
Portrait of Wg Cdr Basil Embry.

Below
Blenheim IV R3816 at Wattisham, 1941. KEC

Just six weeks after it started, the Battle of France was over. The last of the RAF units deployed to support the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) had left the country by the middle of June 1940. During the fierce fighting 912 aircrew had been killed or missing in action; around 150 had been taken prisoner, but a small number remained free. Almost 1,000 aircraft had been lost.

It was not only aircrew who found themselves behind enemy lines. As the squadrons of the Advanced Air Striking Force (AASF) and the Air Component of the BEF lost forward airfields and retreated deeper into France, gallant ground crew made great efforts to re-establish landing grounds.

It was inevitable that some airmen became cut off or lost contact with their units in the chaos of retreating armies and refugees. Others were stranded when the surviving aircraft finally flew back to the UK, leaving many to find their own way home.

With French ports in German hands, the survivors headed south for Marseille or towards the Pyrenees. At this stage of the war, the escape lines that would later do such brave and dedicated work assisting the men shot down over enemy-held territory had still not been established. So, with the help of local people, a great deal of initiative and a large slice of luck, some managed to make a 'Home Run' and get back to freedom. ➤

"...with the help of local people, a great deal of initiative and a large slice of luck, some managed to make a 'Home Run' and get back to freedom."



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



SIGNPOST OMEN

The most famous of the early evaders was the charismatic Wg Cdr Basil Embry, who went on to reach high command later in the war. He was the CO of the Blenheim-equipped 107 Squadron based at Wattisham and had led the unit on many bombing operations over Norway, the Low Countries and France.

At 16:00 on May 27, 1940, Embry took off in Mk.IV L9391 to attack German armoured columns near St Omer. The formation of 12 Blenheims ran into heavy anti-aircraft fire over the target. His aircraft was hit but he managed to drop his bombs before it became

uncontrollable and he gave the order to bale out. Gunner F/Sgt G E Lang was killed and Plt Off T A Whiting was taken prisoner.

Embry had been wounded but landed safely and was soon captured. After spending a night at a Luftwaffe headquarters, he joined a large British prisoner-of-war column, which was marched in a south-easterly direction.

Passing a signpost to the French village of Embry, which he saw as an appropriate omen, he made the decision to escape, jumping down a bank into a ditch and remaining hidden until nightfall.

Walking cross-country, he came across a small farm where an old

Top
A Blenheim IV of 107 Squadron.

Above
Airmen on the Marne, heading south, pose for a photograph.

Right
Basil Embry in France post-war, posing at the road sign that helped him decide to escape.





Above
Manhandling an AASF
Battle. KEC

farmer gave him shelter and some food and dried his clothes. Embry decided to travel at night so he remained hidden near the farm throughout the day. Over the following two nights he attempted to cross a very busy road but had to return to his hiding place where the farmer fed him.

UNWILLING CAPTIVE

As he was making such slow progress at night, Embry decided to try walking quite openly by day. Taking an old coat and a cap from a scarecrow to cover his uniform he set off at lunchtime and walked towards the River Somme. But there was so much German activity that he realised he had no choice but to travel at night. Over the next two days German and French forces exchanged artillery fire but eventually Embry reached the Somme and managed to cross.

He had hoped to cross the German lines but with the French in retreat he was never able to get behind the front line. On June 5 he reached a deserted farm but within hours German forces arrived and he had to hide in a hayloft for the next two days.

With his wound turning septic

Embry decided he must make faster progress and travel by day, despite the added risk. Early the next day he ran into a German patrol and was captured. He was taken to a farmhouse and asked his guard for water. As the soldier approached, Embry knocked him out, made his escape and hid until nightfall when he resumed heading southeast.

He was soon apprehended and tried to persuade a German officer that he was from the Irish Free State, spoke Gaelic and knew very little French. Asked to speak in Gaelic, he rambled in Urdu, which appeared to convince the German officer. After a few hours he was set free.

PARIS BY BICYCLE

Over the next few days Embry headed for the coast but soon realised the Germans were in full control of the area. Setting off south, he found a bicycle and made for Paris, arriving on June 19. Reaching the American Consulate he was taken to the British section and introduced to the English wife of a Russian count. She took him to their flat where her husband suggested he head for Bordeaux.

The consulate gave him 300

francs and he bought a bicycle with some of the money. He set off for Bordeaux at 05:00 on June 21 and reached Tours, where he mingled with crowds in order to cross a guarded bridge over the River Loire.

Embry continued to run into German patrols, but when he reached Le Blanc he found only French soldiers. He met some French officers near Limoges and was taken to see a general who gave him breakfast and a pass allowing him to travel on all French railways. He also advised him to "get moving".

HEADING FOR SPAIN

The French Army gave Embry a lift to Brive where he caught a train for Toulouse. There he met another evader, Lance Bombardier A E Bird, and they decided to travel together. They were told a British ship was due to leave Marseille and a French Army unit drove them to the port, only to discover that the ship had departed.

The pair then headed for Perpignan, near the Spanish border, but the British Consulate there was closed. At nearby Port Vendres they tried to steal a boat, but without success.





A few days later, Embry and Bird reached the border where they were able to contact the Assistant British Consul in Barcelona. They waited for 19 days for the appropriate papers to be prepared. The French police were helpful and Bird got away first.

A day later Embry crossed the border in the boot of a car. He reached Barcelona before being taken first to Madrid and then to Gibraltar. He arrived in Plymouth aboard HMS *Vidette* on August 2.

WG CDR 'SMITH'

During his debrief with MI9, the organisation dealing with escape and evasion, Embry made the following statement: "I should like to make a special request that no part of the 'narrative' of this report is communicated to the press or that my name is mentioned as having escaped."

He had two fundamental reasons for this request: he did not want to implicate any of his French helpers; and he had every intention of returning to operational flying.

Had the Germans known his name, and had he been shot down again, he would have been subjected to intense interrogation to disclose details of those who had come to his aid. In the event, Embry flew on many more operations, despite holding very senior

rank, when he identified himself as 'Wing Commander Smith'.

Embry's return from France was a great boost to morale for RAF aircrews. He was able to pass on much information to MI9, which proved very useful as it endeavoured to set up escape lines and devise a training and briefing programme for operational aircrew.

For his brilliant escape he was awarded a Bar to his DSO, which had been earned on the North-West Frontier of India. An outstanding leader, he later commanded the Second Tactical Air Force, having received two more Bars to his DSO. He retired as an air chief marshal.

When the RAF Escaping Society was established in 1945, Embry became its first chairman, a post he held for ten years. He had great affection for those who had helped him during his escape and he returned to France in 1950 to meet the very brave farmers who had helped him.

LOSING BATTLE

Nineteen-year-old LAC Donald Phillips was a wireless operator/air gunner (WOP/AG) with 150 Squadron when war broke out. The unit's Fairey Battles left for France on September 2, 1939 as part of the AASF.



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

During the period following the German advance in May 1940, the Battle squadrons suffered huge losses. Phillips and his crew had been forced down twice. They took off from Haussey at 10:05 on June 13 on the second 'op' of the day and headed for Vernon where they ran into a large formation of Messerschmitt Bf 109s.

The Battle was no match for the German fighter. Phillips kept up a constant fusillade but his aircraft was badly damaged and Plt Off A R Gulley attempted to crash-land. It hit the ground hard, bounced over a wall and caught fire. Phillips and the observer, Sgt J Berry, were injured and suffered burns but managed to scramble clear. They tried to rescue Gulley but were beaten back by the fire and their pilot died.

The two men were soon captured and admitted to different hospitals. Phillips was taken to Amiens where he remained for three weeks until transferred to a nearby prison camp. He teamed up with Pte J Witton and the pair made a rope with the intention of escaping. On July 28 they attached it to a tree and climbed up an unguarded wall; they then dropped the rope and scrambled down on the other side

and hid in a wood until it was dark. (Berry also successfully escaped.)

GERMAN CROSSING

Intending to walk to Spain, carrying farm implements as a disguise, they headed cross-country, avoiding all towns. The pair had to swim the River Somme but a Frenchman ferried them across the Oise and German soldiers rowed them across the Marne. They pressed on to a town a few miles west of Dijon.

By mingling with a herd of cows they crossed into Vichy-held France. Once safely established a few miles inside the 'unoccupied zone', Phillips and Witton got a lift in a lorry to Macon where they reported to the Military Bureau and were given railway tickets to Lyon. On arrival there they went to the American Consulate but found it closed. So they tried the French military authorities, but their luck ran out – they were arrested and put in prison.

Over the next few weeks they were moved around. At Grenoble, they were put to work mending roads and were allowed out of the camp for a few hours in the evening. They managed to make contact with a Frenchman

who agreed to take them by car to Lyon together with a British officer, Captain W G Stuart-Mentieth, who was also on the run.

ESCAPE-MINDED

This time they were able to make contact with the American Consul in Lyon who gave them 500 francs, enabling the trio to take the train to Perpignan. There they started to walk cross-country towards the Spanish frontier.

As they approached the border, shots rang out and Stuart-Mentieth rushed into a vineyard and was not seen again. (He eventually reached Spain and managed to return to England.)

Phillips and Witton hid in a wood and remained concealed until they were able to cross over the mountains. For two days they wandered, unsure of their whereabouts, eventually reaching a Spanish farm where they were given food and shelter.

Soon after leaving they were arrested by Spanish police and spent several weeks in prisons before being sent to Gibraltar with a large group of other evaders. They left 'The Rock' on November 19 in a convoy and arrived at Liverpool three weeks later. ➤

Left

A memorial to the evaders and their helpers in the mid-Pyrenees.

Below

A Battle of 150 Squadron in enemy hands.



"The Battle was no match for the German fighter. Phillips kept up a constant fusillade but his aircraft was badly damaged and Plt Off A R Gulley attempted to crash-land."

FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



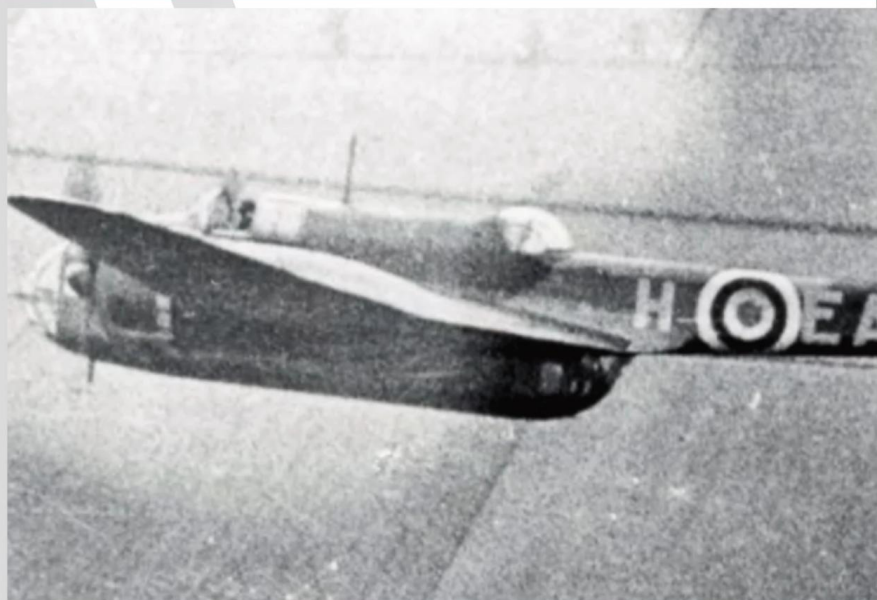
Above
Sketch by Cuthbert Orde
of Sqn Ldr Lewis Hodges
in his days with the
Special Duties unit, 161
Squadron.

Below
Bombing up a Hampden
of 49 Squadron.

Phillips was debriefed by MI9 and his information helped to develop escape aids, train aircrew in evasion and establish links with organisations in France prepared to assist. He also discovered that all NCO aircrew had been made sergeants during his absence.

In March 1941 it was announced that Sgt Phillips had been awarded the Military Medal, which he received from the King. Shortly afterwards he received the Croix de Guerre from Free French leader General de Gaulle.

For a time, Phillips, and other successful evaders, toured RAF stations to talk about their experiences and to encourage aircrew to be prepared and be escape-



"With a damaged aircraft and virtually no fuel, Hodges gave the order to bale out. By the time the crew had left, P1347 was too low for Hodges to use his parachute and he crash-landed in a field near St Brieuç."

minded. Donald Phillips re-joined 150 Squadron and later saw service in Italy. He retired from the RAF in 1954 as a flight lieutenant.

OFF COURSE AND EMPTY

During early September 1940, many of Bomber Command's squadrons were attacking enemy-held ports in France and Belgium where the Germans were building up vessels for the invasion of England. Other units struck at airfields in an effort to disrupt the Luftwaffe's bomber force and small raids were also mounted against towns in Germany.

On the night of September 4/5, Fg Off Lewis Hodges and his crew of 49 Squadron took off from Scampton in

Hampden P1347 to bomb Stettin, a target at the aircraft's maximum range. On their return, they strayed well off course and were fired on by anti-aircraft defences at an airfield in Brittany.

With a damaged aircraft and virtually no fuel, Hodges gave the order to bale out. By the time the crew had left, P1347 was too low for Hodges to use his parachute and he crash-landed in a field near St Brieuç. There he discovered that his WOP/AG, Sgt J H Wyatt, was still on board – his intercom had become disconnected and he had not heard the bale out order. (Of the rest of the crew, Sgts Hitchings and Turnbull were captured.)





The two men set off on foot to walk to Spain, keeping to fields the whole time. They moved from farm to farm, where they obtained civilian clothes, boots and maps, which enabled them to avoid built-up areas.

For three weeks they kept walking. A fisherman took them across the River Loire, east of Nantes, before they headed south to Chauvigny on the Demarcation Line where they had to cross the River Vienne. Once in the 'unoccupied zone', villagers took them to a château owned by a Frenchman married to an Englishwoman. She gave them a complete set of clothing and some money and put them on a bus for Limoges.

NORTH AFRICAN DIVERSION

Hodges and Wyatt then took trains to Toulouse and, later, Luchon, in the foothills of the Pyrenees. There they were arrested and put in a detention centre where they found 30 other British personnel. On October 18 Hodges was taken to Marseille where he was able to escape and head for the docks, stowing away on a ship bound for North Africa.

At Oran in Algeria he was discovered and returned to Marseille. The game seemed to be up: he was sent to Fort St Jean and imprisoned for two months.

At the end of January 1941 he was taken in handcuffs to a prison for British officers at St Hippolyte du Fort, near Nîmes. There it was possible to get parole on the understanding that no attempt would be made to escape. Hodges languished in the camp until early April before meeting an old school friend who spoke fluent French. They

forged passes and gave themselves five days' 'leave'.

Leaving the fort, they bought railway tickets with their passes and headed for Perpignan where they took a taxi to a small, remote town near the Spanish frontier. They climbed to a mountain pass at 4,000ft (1,219m) and crossed into Spain.

On April 13 they were caught by Spanish customs officers and taken to a prison near Barcelona before being transferred to the infamous Miranda concentration camp where conditions were primitive. Hodges managed to contact the British Consul in Barcelona who negotiated his release after eight weeks and arranged for him to be taken to Gibraltar.

On June 13 he boarded a Sunderland flying-boat and arrived at Plymouth the following day. For his activities in France he was mentioned in despatches.

Hodges went on to have a very distinguished career flying in support of the Special Operations Executive, including landing Hudsons and Lysanders in fields in France to drop and collect agents. Among those he picked up were two future French Prime Ministers, Auriol and Mitterand. He later commanded a special duties squadron in Burma.

For his wartime exploits he was awarded the DSO and the DFC, and a Bar for each. He was also decorated by the French Government. After retiring from the RAF he was the president of the RAF Escaping Society for many years and then president of the Escape Lines Memorial Society. Air Chief Marshal Sir Lewis Hodges KCB CBE DSO* DFC*, Grand Officier de la Legion d'Honneur, Croix de Guerre, died in January 2007.



BRAVE PATRIOTS

These very early evasions established a pattern that would last until after the Allied invasion of northwest Europe in 1944. With the bomber campaign intensifying, it was inevitable that an increasing number of men would find themselves stranded behind enemy lines. Most were captured, spending the rest of the war as prisoners, but more than 5,000 Allied airmen found their way home.

By 1941, numerous escape 'lines' became established with the support of MI9. The major effort came from patriotic and incredibly brave 'helpers' who, at great risk to their own lives, sheltered and guided to freedom airmen on the run.

As these organisations multiplied and developed, there was an additional value which can never be underestimated – an increasing amount of the German war effort was tied down, with troops diverted from their normal duties to search for evading airmen and to counter the escape organisations.

With the passage of time, the generation of men and women who displayed such fortitude and bravery is fading into the past. Their exploits remind us of just what the human spirit is capable of when freedom and life are in peril.

Today's generation, and those that follow, need to be reminded of the sacrifices these warriors and patriots were prepared to make so that others could live in the freedom denied to so many of them and their colleagues. This article is dedicated to the memory of all RAF and Commonwealth evaders and their many helpers. ††

Above left
Hampdens of 49
Squadron. KEC

Above
Plt Off Lewis Hodges.
ALL VIA AUTHOR UNLESS NOTED



*Junkers Ju 87B-2 of 5/StG 2 based at Lannion, France, August 1940.
PETE WEST © 2015*

"It was only a matter of time before the Luftwaffe high command appreciated that what had been a highly efficient strike weapon had become a liability."

BLOODY

UNTIL THE MIDDLE OF AUGUST, ENGLISH SKIES SEEMED FULL OF JU 87S; THEN THEY WERE GONE FOR GOOD.

Sunday

CRAIG DAVID DESCRIBES THE DAY THE STUKA FORCE ADMITTED DEFEAT

Sturzkampfbomber translates as dive-bomber: the Luftwaffe shortened the term to Stuka. From the Spanish Civil War through to the carnage on the Eastern Front one aircraft became wholly associated with the word Stuka – the Junkers Ju 87. With its banshee wail, it became the overriding image of the Blitzkrieg and a much-feared weapon.

With surprise on the side of the Stukagruppen, and opposition forces generally in disarray, the Ju 87's relatively slow speed and poor defensive armament was not a disadvantage. But using it to confront the organised, well disciplined and – thanks to radar – pre-warned RAF was a different matter. Escorting Stukas was not easy and the provision of fighter cover countered the rationale that had devised the Sturzkampfbomber.

OVERWHELMED

It was only a matter of time before the Luftwaffe high command appreciated that what had been a highly efficient strike weapon had become a liability. The moment came in the mid-afternoon of Sunday, August 18, 1940.

A fleet of some 60 Ju 87s of StG

77 headed for the south coast of England, with the airfields of Thorney Island and Ford and the radar station at Poling as their objectives. While Thorney Island was the furthest away, its position on a peninsula in Chichester Harbour meant it presented few navigational challenges. Ford, to the west of Littlehampton, was less obvious – but it was less than 3 miles (4.8km) from the coast and close to the meandering River Arun. The radar station's tall towers were prominent behind the town of Littlehampton – there was no mistaking it.

Stukas of I and II/StG 77 attacked the two airfields, causing significant damage, but thankfully few fatalities. Poling was taken on by III/StG 77 and again the Stukas did what they did best – accurate positioning of bombs – and two of the towers were crippled.

It was 14:30 and the dive-bombers were pulling out and regrouping, ready to return to base, when Hurricanes of 43 and 601 Squadrons and Spitfires of 152 and 602 Squadrons arrived. They pounced on III/StG 77 and were in a position to go after the Stukas that had hit Thorney Island and

Ford 15 minutes earlier.

An early victim of Fighter Command was the Gruppe Kommandeur, Hptm Herbert Meisel, and his gunner who perished in their Ju 87B-1 of Stab/StG 77 in the English Channel. The British press meanwhile made great capital out of Ju 87B-1 'S2+UN' of II/StG 77 which fell to the guns of a 602 Squadron Spitfire. It crash-landed almost intact on the Ham Manor Golf Course at Littlehampton.

As the headquarters of StG 77 began to take in the day's events, it became clear that 14 Stukas had failed to return and another four were badly damaged. The force was withdrawn from the order of battle and prepared for anti-shipping strikes and even small-scale night nuisance raids.

The havoc that the Stukas had wreaked on the south coast was repairable – a distraction and a nuisance, but nothing cataclysmic. The loss of men and machines suffered by the Luftwaffe, however, would take months to remedy. Germany had invested heavily in its Ju 87 force: a new use awaited the Sturzkampfbomber: on the Russian Steppes. ☐

Top left

Stukas of StG 1 over the English Channel in the summer of 1940.

Bottom left and below

Stukas of I/StG 76 in the early summer of 1940. By July, the unit was re-designated I/StG 3.



THE THREE *Musketeers*

THREE PILOTS PAUSE
FOR A PHOTO ALONGSIDE A Bf 109. FROM THIS, **CHRIS GOSS**
UNCOVERED THE BACKGROUND AND FATES OF
THREE LUFTWAFFE WARRIORS



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

There must have been countless impromptu wartime photographs taken of aircrew, ground crew or a combination of both with 'their' aircraft as the backdrop. Every image has a tale to tell.

A photo of three Luftwaffe airmen leaning against a Messerschmitt Bf 109 during the Battle of Britain prompted research into the stories of the trio. The fates of Werner Karl, Willi Ghesla and Heinrich Höhnisch were fairly typical of the conflict.

Uffz Werner Karl joined 1/JG 53 in May 1940 as a replacement pilot during the early days of the Battle of France. He did not see any real action until the start of the Battle of Britain, invariably flying as Rottenflieger (wingman) to the

Staffel Kapitän, Hptm Hans-Karl Mayer who, by August 1940, had shot down nine British and French aircraft. His tenth 'kill' was witnessed by Werner Karl on the 12th.

IRON CROSS

By August 22, 1940 Karl had flown sufficient missions to have been awarded the Iron Cross Second Class. He had claimed two RAF aircraft but a lack of witnesses meant he was never given official confirmation.

In preparation for the offensive on London, the Staffel moved from Rennes in Brittany to Le Touquet south of the Pas de Calais and, as Karl

approached his 100th operational flight, apprehension was starting to show: "There was no talk about fear or being killed or taken prisoner. At least, nobody admitted if he was scared. All around us [were] heroes, both in the newspapers and on the radio.

"I think everybody thought that he was the only one who was afraid. For example, our briefings were always held outside in the open air. Immediately after it finished and before we went to our planes, we all ran to the latrines and sat on the toilet. At first we thought it was sabotage but in fact it was fear."

At 07:40 the first crossed headed

on September 2, German aircraft the Kent coast and towards Biggin Hill, Eastchurch, North Weald and Rochford. They were almost immediately engaged by the first of six RAF fighter squadrons. ➤

Below

The 'three musketeers' - Werner Karl, Willi Ghesla and Heinrich Höhnisch.



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



Above
Werner Karl in his Bf 109.

Right
A Bf 109E-4 of I/JG 53
at Neuville.

Below
Werner Karl alongside
'14', the aircraft he
crash-landed on
September 2, 1940.

One of the RAF pilots was Fg Off Alec Trueman of 253 Squadron: "I was in Green Section when we were attacked by fighters at 18,000ft just before we closed with the bombers they were escorting. I did a very steep diving turn to get them off my tail and had straightened out and was climbing again when an Me 109 dived in front of me.

"I got on his tail at once and fired two bursts of about two to three seconds each, opening fire at 250 yards and closing to 150 yards. I saw another Me 109 getting onto my tail and I dived away. Each time I fired, bits flew off his tail plane and rear end of fuselage. The attack was near Rochester aerodrome; I had no time to observe if enemy aircraft came down."



BRINGING UP THE REAR

Karl's memories of that day are vivid: "At about 08:00 hours, I went to the airfield at Neuville with the rest of the Staffel. This morning there was an unusual thick fog so we didn't think a combat mission was possible. To our surprise, the Geschwader command gave the combat order as, according to the meteorologists and reconnaissance aircraft, this ground fog was only 10m high.

"I think we took off at about 08:30 hours. We could still not see



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

anything because of the fog and dust until after we had taken off – as forecast, we went through the thick fog into the most wonderful sunshine. At once we formed up. I was the wingman to my highly-decorated Staffel Kapitän, Hptm Hans-Karl Mayer, in the first Schwarm.

“When we reached the middle of the Channel, Mayer had to turn back due to engine trouble and Oblt Ohly took command. So then positions changed and I had to fly at the rear of the formation with

Simultaneously, we opened fire, but unfortunately I received a concentrated burst into the back of the fuselage which destroyed my radio.

“My Staffel did not see all of this and flew on. During the dogfight with the enemy fighters I was outnumbered and without hope, and I received many hits in the cockpit. One of these caused a superficial wound at the back of my head and I lost a lot of blood.

“I tried to shake off my opponents... by going into a power

area, which fits in well with Hythe where Uffz Karl crash-landed.

“I remember that it did crash-land near a Do 17 at Newchurch. Later that day on my second sortie, I again destroyed another '109 and also claimed a Do 215 damaged. My third trip of the day yielded nothing. This is the only time I have ever had news on one of my ex-opponents!” (This was Lacey's 12th of 28 confirmed victories.)

Karl continued: “On instinct, I rolled over my right wing and dived again. I went down and tried



Left
Unidentified pilot in a Bf 109E-4 of I/JG 53.

“We could still not see anything because of the fog and dust until after we had taken off – as forecast, we went through the thick fog into the most wonderful sunshine.”

another comrade and had to protect the Staffel against attacks from behind.

“Our mission was a Freie Jagd [fighter sweep] between 4,000 and 5,000m as a cover for our bombers which were attacking a target north of London. We reached the southern outskirts of London without enemy contact but then, after we turned east, I heard the warning over the radio that enemy fighters were attacking from the west.

“Because I did not want to be caught by surprise from behind, I flew a turn to the left and so there was some distance between my Staffel and me. Just as I was turning, I saw three Spitfires rushing down on me.

diver. At first I thought I had been successful. I could not see any pursuer so I made a kind of inventory of my plane. It looked quite bad so I headed for home. However, a quick look into my rear view mirror showed there was an enemy fighter behind me in an ideal shooting position.”

VICTORY NO.12

It is thought that Karl was initially damaged by Alec Trueman and, if he thought he was lucky to get away, his next assailant – Sgt James ‘Ginger’ Lacey of 501 Squadron – was not as obliging. In later years, Lacey commented: “According to my logbook, I had taken off at 07:30 hours and claimed an Me 109 destroyed in the Dungeness

to get rid of my pursuer by hedge-hopping so it would not be possible for him to shoot at me. However, he was too clever. He flew about 200m higher and behind me so he could get more hits when the situation was suitable.

“Apprehensive, I noticed that white and black smoke was coming out of my plane which meant hits in the engine and cooling system. There was a very strong smell of petrol in my bullet-riddled cockpit – a fuel line had been hit. Now there was the danger of explosion the next time my cockpit was hit and my first thought was to bale out, but that was absurd as I was too low.

“I looked back to my pursuer but could not see him, but to



Right
Hans-Karl Mayer showing
damage to his fighter on
August 12, 1940.

Below
Heinrich Höhnisch in
relaxed mood on his
Bf 109.

my surprise I noticed him to my right just above me. I don't know why he didn't shoot me down – I was completely defenceless. Either he had no ammunition left or he thought it was not necessary anymore.

"It was obvious my flight was coming to an end and I only hoped it would be possible to ditch in the Channel. This hope was in vain as, after I had pulled my plane over rising ground, my engine stopped, perhaps due to overheating.

"I could see the sea but could not reach it and had to make a forced-landing on the beach. My right wing was torn off by one of those obstacles to prevent airborne landings. I managed to get out of the cockpit before I fainted."

CHAINED TO THE BOMBERS

The second 'musketeer' in the group photo, Heinrich Höhnisch, joined 1/JG 53 in late 1939. His first 'kill' came on May 14, 1940 when he shot down a Hurricane near Sedan. Within the next ten minutes he also shot down two Fairey Battles. By the end of the Battle of France he had a total of four victories and was awarded the Iron Cross First Class on May 22, 1940.



Flying over England, he shot down two Hurricanes on the evening of August 13 but almost became a victim himself: "We had an escort mission for some Ju 88s near

Portsmouth. I shared the shooting down of three Hurricanes flying in line. After that we had a dogfight above a circling Bf

110 Gruppe. I hit a Spitfire between the fuselage and the wing with two 20mm shells.

"I was then hit in my right wing by a Hurricane which came up behind me. I escaped by rolling and diving. The Hurricane followed to sea-level but turned away when I climbed for home."

Since then, Höhnisch had not increased his personal tally of 'kills'



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



"I was then hit in my right wing by a Hurricane which came up behind me. I escaped by rolling and diving. The Hurricane followed to sea-level but turned away when I climbed for home."

and it seemed unlikely he would shoot down anything on September 9 – almost a week short of his 23rd birthday – when the Staffel was 'chained' to the bomber formation and he was assigned to the lookout rotte.

"Our task was to give direct fighter cover to the rear of a He 111 bomber formation," he said. "One Kette [chain] of bombers got

separated so our Staffel looked after them. We had only seven Bf 109s and I was the tail-end Charlie with Ofw Müller.

"Approaching London Docks there was no contact with the enemy but I was sure we could expect attacks out of the sun as soon as we turned 180 degrees for our return flight. To my surprise I saw, when I was looking towards

the rest of my Staffel, six Spitfires on a reciprocal course in a line about 50m above me.

"To avoid the inevitable attack, I tried to come up with my Staffel flying in front and below me. When I was level with my Staffel Kapitän, I thought I had made it."

WORSE FOR WEAR

Combat analysis for September 9 is full of confusion. It seems the Duxford Wing, consisting of Spitfires of 19 Squadron and Hurricanes of 242 and 310 Squadrons, was south of London, close to Biggin Hill.

Led that day by Flt Lt Wilfrid Clouston, 19 Squadron went after the fighters. Clouston's combat report said: "While on patrol leading the squadron at 20,000ft, we encountered a large formation of enemy aircraft. We had been detailed by Wing Leader to attack

Left
A Bf 109E under camouflage netting at Neuville.



Above
Heinrich Rühl, Hans-Karl Mayer, Hans Ohly and Willi Ghesla.

Left
Personnel of 1/JG 53 in late September 1940. The only 'musketeer' remaining is Willi Ghesla, second from right.

fighters so I climbed and put the squadron into position to attack seven Me 110s. Just as I was about to attack, two Me 109s crossed my sights so I turned on them. The rear one emitted glycol fumes after a short burst and then burst into flames.

"I then attacked second Me 109 and fired the rest of ammunition. I could see my shots hitting this aircraft, and when my ammunition had finished I saw him going down in a left-hand gliding turn, looking rather the worse for wear."

Höhnisch meanwhile noted: "There was a rattle like an explosion in my plane and flames hit my face with the pressure of a blow torch. With greatest difficulty I got out of the plane. I landed ➤



Hptm Hans-Karl Mayer was awarded the Ritterkreuz and became Gruppen Kommandeur only to be killed in action October 17, 1940.



Mayer's Bf 109.



The funeral of the only 1 Staffel victim during the Battle of Britain: Fw Heinrich Bezner was shot down August 26, 1940 and his body later washed ashore in France.



with severe burns to my face and bullet wounds to my right calf. I stayed in hospital in Woolwich for two months."

THEN THERE WAS ONE

That left just one of the trio, something not lost on 25-year-old Uffz Willi Ghesla (pronounced Gazler). Transferring to 1 Staffel from 2 Staffel in June 1940, he did not score any victories in the Battle of France but was awarded the Iron Cross Second Class on May 18. His first 'kill' was believed to be on August 30, with another the following day and a third on September 7.

On what became known as Battle of Britain Day, September 15, Ghesla chalked up two 'kills'. But the achievement was tempered by his friend Fw Herbert Tzschoppem being shot down and taken prisoner.

Ghesla recalled his mission of October 5: "The night before this flight I was on guard duty and so

was not assigned to what would become my last flight. However, as the mission was only escorting Bf 110s as far as Dover, because of low cloud, I agreed to fly with my Staffel.

"Near Dover, the cloud was higher and our Staffel Kapitän ordered us to fly on to London at 7,000 to 8,000m altitude. A comrade and I flew as cover for the rest of the Staffel just under the clouds. Suddenly, British fighters appeared out of the clouds and before being able to turn away I received hits in the engine and oil cooler. I dived down to 4,000m, got my plane under control again and tried to make for Calais by gliding.

"But now I was fired at again and I lost consciousness for a short time. When I had a clear head again, I found myself near the ground and immediately looked for somewhere to land. I did not have a choice and I landed under difficult circumstances in a meadow.

JG 53's 1 Staffel over England.

LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



"The night before this flight I was on guard duty and so was not assigned to what would become my last flight. However, as the mission was only escorting Bf 110s as far as Dover, because of low cloud, I agreed to fly with my Staffel."

"During this crash-landing – and because I had opened my seat belts instead of my parachute release – I hit my head on the Revi gunsight and got concussion. I quickly left my plane and walked to a nearby farmhouse where I was captured a few minutes later."

JOINING THE PARTY

It would seem Ghesla had been bounced by Hurricanes of 1 Squadron RCAF and it's possible that two pilots from this unit were responsible for the two 1/JG 53 losses that day: Willi Ghesla and his Rotten Führer, Lt Alfred Zeis.

Fg Off Hartland Molson recalled: "On our way south from Northolt we were jumped by some Me 109s. I believe we were flying as a wing

with 303 (Polish) Squadron and 229 Squadron vectored onto a bomber raid coming over the coast towards Canterbury.

"When I returned to altitude, as so often happened everybody seemed to be a long way off and I was alone, but a few miles ahead was a terrific dogfight. Heading to join, I saw a pair of Me 109s well above the party, cruising around looking for a victim and I was conceited enough to think I might score on them.

"At full bore I tried to get closer to the rear one and opened fire too far away; he half-rolled out of sight and I thought perhaps I had damaged him. I tried to close on the leader of the pair. I neglected to keep my eye on the first one who, of course, simply came up

behind me and shot me down."

It's possible that Molson was shot down by Zeis, who was then shot down by Fg Off Paul Pitcher, also from 1 Squadron RCAF.

The 'three musketeers' were luckier than many other German aircrew shot down in the Battle of Britain in that all three survived. Between August 25 and October 5, 1940, 1/JG 53 lost nine Messerschmitt 109s with seven pilots being taken prisoner, one killed and one slightly wounded.

The trio met up again as prisoners of war and the author was fortunate to put them back in contact with each other again in the early 1990s. Sadly, they are no longer with us, Werner Karl being the last to pass away, in December 2013. ☘

Above left

Willi Ghesla on his Bf 109. Note the gutted hangar behind.

Above

Lt Alfred Zeis, shot down same day as Willi Ghesla.

Below left

Prisoners of War in Canada. Willi Ghesla is on the back row, second from right. Heinrich Höhnisch is sitting third from left. Werner Karl is sitting far right.





Above

A Heinkel He 111 of KG 26 (identified by the lion badge on the nose) after having taxied into a car at its Norwegian base. Damage appears slight, but the car and trailer were very much the worse for wear!

Right

Believed to be a Bf 109E-4 of I (Jagd)/LG 2, this machine came down on the beach at Cap Gris Nez. It was not recovered in time and the sea ensured its total demise. Date of the incident was either August 31, 1940 or September 23, 1940.

Below

On August 30, 1940, Bf 110C-4 3583 'U8+AL' of I/ZG 26 was damaged in combat over the UK and force-landed on the beach at Cap Gris Nez. The crew were not injured so were not identified. The wreck was assessed at 100%, which looking at the condition may come as a surprise, but salt water ingestion might have accounted for the pessimistic rating.





MADE IT!

CHRIS GOSS REVEALS THAT MANY LUFTWAFFE AIRCRAFT THAT MANAGED TO RETURN TO THE CONTINENT WERE WRECKED IN FORCE LANDINGS, OFTEN NEVER TO RETURN TO THE FIGHT

We are all used to seeing photographs of German aircraft having been shot down on British soil, but many more made it back across to Channel to crash-land on the Continent. The Luftwaffe used a percentage system to assess losses and damage.

Any aircraft that went down in the sea, or over enemy territory

was 100% – a total loss. Less than 10% was assessed as minor gunfire damage which could be repaired by the unit. Local damage which required component replacement was in the range of 10-24%. Damage requiring engine or system replacement: 40-45%. Severe damage requiring major component replacement: 45-60%. Total write-off but aircraft could

be cannibalised to varying degrees: 60% and above.

The Luftwaffe kept very detailed loss reports but up to the middle of August 1940, rarely recorded full crew lists (only the officers) and aircraft details. From mid-August onwards, codes, units, crews and work number (serial numbers) were noted, which helps make identification easier.

Above

The coding '9K+AT' identifies this Ju 88 as 5042 of 9/KG 51. Damaged in an attack on Portsmouth on August 12, 1940, it returned to crash-land near Le Havre where it was assessed as 10%. The pilot, Lt Kurt Capesius, and his crew were uninjured.



The remains of a Henschel Hs 126 observation aircraft of 4(H)/31, photographed on August 5, 1940 off Boulogne. While on a sortie four days earlier it was intercepted south of Hastings by Hurricanes of 145 Squadron. It was eventually shot down by Plt Off Ernest Wakeham but not before the gunner, Uffz Werner Schulze, had shot down and killed Sub-Lt Ian Kestin. The pilot, Fw Ullrich Trusen, was reported missing whilst Schulze's body was recovered from the sea on August 10.



One of the most intense days of the Battle of Britain was August 18, 1940. Do 17Z-3 'F1+CT' of 9/KG 76 was involved in the attack on Kenley and badly damaged in the target area. Fw Reichel brought it down near Abbeville with a wounded crew member. The aircraft was assessed at 60%.



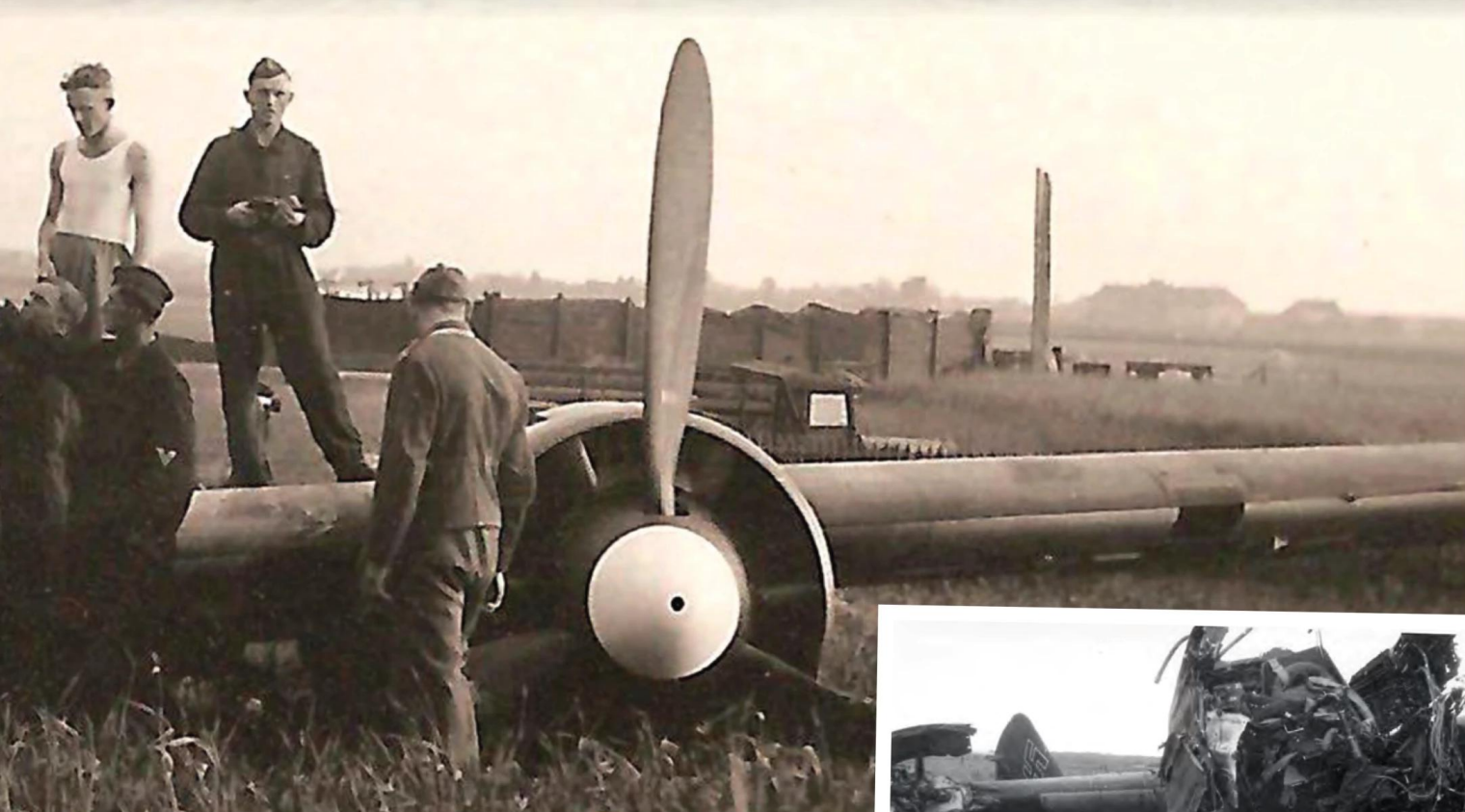
Above
A brand new Ju 88A of II/LG 1 appearing to have developed double engine failure.



Left
Taking off from Grandvilliers on July 6, 1940, Uffz Hermann Marquardt of I/JG 3 suffered a problem. Bf 109E-1 4051 crashed, killing him and a member of ground crew. The hulk was assessed as 90%.

LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

Heinkel 111H-3 5560 'A1+LM' of 4/KG 53 suffered a radio failure while on operations over the UK. The crew became lost, eventually crash-landing near Wesel in Germany on August 28, 1940. Nobody was injured and the Heinkel was assessed as 50%.



Left and above

A Ju 88A that suffered engine failure on take-off from Buc during a non-operational flight on July 16, 1940. Amazingly, Uffz Martin Sigglechner and two crew survived.



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS

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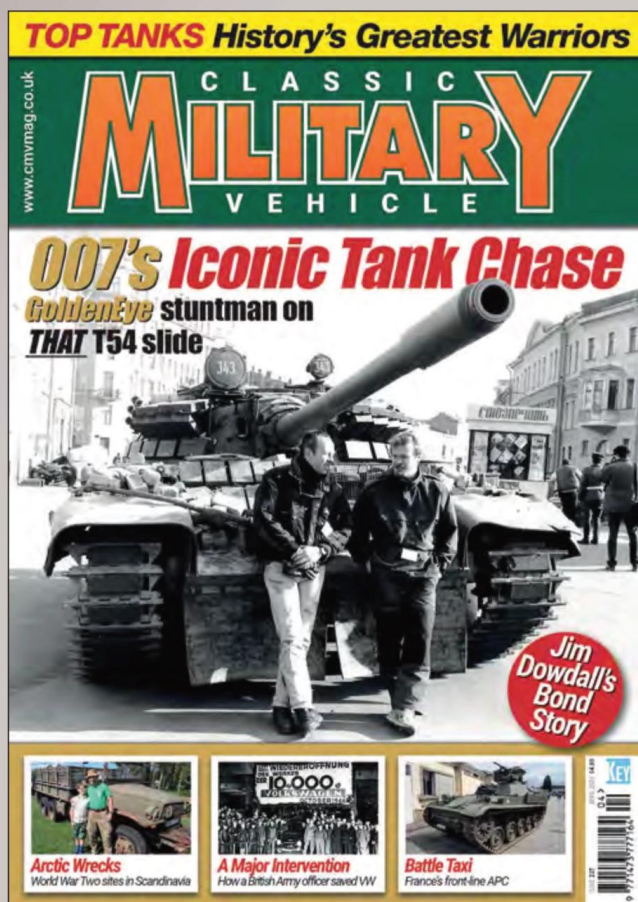
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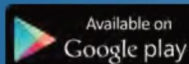
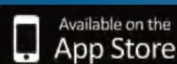
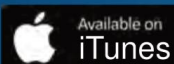
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RICHTOFEN

CHRIS GOSS PROFILES THE FORTUNES OF BATTLE OF
BRITAIN PILOTS OF THE ELITE JG 2 – THE

RICHTHOFENGESCHWADER

Kameraden



Hans 'Assi' Hahn, at Beaumont-le-Roger in northern France on August 23, 1940 as a Gefreiter. Two days later Rudi moved with his Geschwader to Mardyck on the coast between Dunkirk and Calais in preparation for escort sorties for Luftwaffe bombers attacking London.

From Mardyck he flew his first five sorties, usually as Rottenflieger (wingman) to Lt Julius Meimberg,

before the unit moved back to Beaumont. Of his next 16 operational flights, the only one of note was on October 10 when he witnessed Lt Meimberg achieve his sixth victory – a Hurricane which broke up. This was possibly that of Sgt Jaroslav Hlavak, of 56 Squadron, who was shot down and killed in combat with Bf 109s and crashed near Worget in Dorset.

By then Miese's war was not far



Above
Rudi Miese with a unit mascot.

Left
Left to right: (unknown), Siegfried Schnell, Hans 'Assi' Hahn and Rudi Miese.

A capital 'R' in script on a white shield painted near the cockpit adorned the Messerschmitt Bf 109s of JG 2. This potent symbol set the unit apart from the other Luftwaffe fighter Geschwadern and it was known as the Richthofengeschwader, honouring the famous 'Red Baron' of the Great War.

Rudi Miese joined 4/JG 2, commanded by the enigmatic Hptm



"We were already below the sun when we pulled back to the left when, from above and the left and behind the cockpit, I was hit by tracer."

off its conclusion. He recalled the late afternoon of November 15, 1940: "We took off from Le Havre; 4/JG 2 had six aircraft led by Lt Meimberg and was at the rear of the Geschwader acting as lookout Staffel. I flew at the rear of the Staffel with Uffz Lorenz Dessoy as my Rottenführer.

"Shortly before reaching the English coast we spotted – coming from the left and below – a formation of 12 to 15 Spitfires. Dessoy and myself swung to the left and attacked them from the front and above. [As for] the aircraft I attacked, I do not know whether I hit it or not as it rolled and dived away. We were already below the sun when we pulled back to the left when, from above and the left and behind the cockpit, I was hit by tracer."

SNAPPERS BEHIND!

The Spitfires were from 74 Squadron, one of whose pilots was Sgt John Glendinning. His combat report read: "I heard the shout 'Snappers behind!' and broke away with my section, weaving to the right and left, and saw about 20 yellow-nosed Me 109s above me on the port side. I immediately broke away to the right and, turning steeply to both right and left, saw four Me 109s going down in a vertical dive attempting to catch a

Spitfire. I tried to follow but could not get near.

"I again broke away and did climbing turns to 18,000ft. I was just levelling out when a Me 109 went past me on my port side. I delivered a beam attack and he flipped over onto his back for a few seconds, seeming to hang in the air. I closed again and gave another burst – pieces flew in all directions and it went down in a series of rolls. Not being satisfied, I gave it another burst and something seemed to explode in the aircraft."

Miese remembers that his Bf 109 "burst into flames and dived. Simultaneously, I threw off the cockpit roof and undid my straps. Then I lost consciousness and must have fallen out and the parachute opened. As consciousness returned, I was hanging about 1,000 to 2000m up, swinging on the parachute quite violently, without flying boots or socks and [with] a hole in my life jacket.

"I was still over the sea but not far from the coastline. My hands and face were burnt and my left arm smashed. Two British aircraft circled me and the pilots waved to me.

"I was blown by the wind closer to the coast and landed on a road by the beach without injuring myself further. About 20 civilians and a policeman came running. The

policeman rolled up the parachute and pulled it away from me. Then a doctor came: he gave me first aid and bandaged my arm in the street. I was then rushed by ambulance to a hospital in Littlehampton. There they operated on my arm three times."

ON THE RECEIVING END

Arriving at 4/JG 2 just after Rudi Miese was Gf Willi Morzinek. Willi's first operational flight was a diversionary sweep over Selsey Bill in Sussex from Beaumont-le-Roger on the late afternoon of October 14, 1940; his third mission involved the combat in which Miese was shot down.

By the end of 1940 Morzinek had flown ten operational sorties. His first victory was not until June 21, 1941, by which time he and his Staffel had converted from the Bf 109E to the 'F. Scrambled from Abbeville-Drucat, he claimed a Spitfire west of Le Touquet.

Mindful that JG 2 claimed ten Spitfires and a single Hurricane – and JG 26 a further seven – that day, it is impossible to say whom he shot down. His second victim, two days later, was possibly Battle of Britain pilot Sgt Hugh Bowen-Morris of 92 Squadron who went down in the Channel and was taken prisoner, badly wounded.

Two days later Morzinek

Above
A Bf 109 of I/JG 2.





"...I lost consciousness and must have fallen out and the parachute opened. As consciousness returned, I was hanging about 1,000 to 2000m up, swinging on the parachute quite violently, without flying boots or socks and [with] a hole in my life jacket."

dispatched another Spitfire, but it was not until September 1941 that he scored again. In the interim he was on the receiving end, force-landing his Bf 109F-2 near Calais at 14:28 on July 11 and reporting "very many British fighters in the St Omer-Calais-Boulogne area".

By the time of his fourth 'kill' – a Spitfire northwest of Le Touquet at 16:25 hrs on September 21, 1941 – Morzinek had flown 47 operational flights in the Bf 109. Again, whom he shot down is hard to ascertain as 'Circus 101' reported the loss of eight Spitfires and a Hurricane, with three pilots killed or missing and the remainder captured.

One of those taken prisoner was Battle of Britain pilot Sqn Ldr Denis Armitage, 129 Squadron's CO: "I bought it some 10 or 12 miles inland from Boulogne. We were doing fighter sweeps over France, a job I never liked very much. It seemed rather useless and costly for what good it did – quite different from the Battle of Britain. I was also getting tired after nearly two years in Fighter Command, the last 15 months without leave except the odd 48 hours snatched when I could fit it in.

"Anyway, I bought it trying to get the squadron together after a little mix-up with some '109s and spent the next 3½ years digging tunnels. My machine was only slightly damaged but a stray incendiary must have got into the petrol system for, just as I was rounding on the cause

of the trouble, the tank went up in flames and I got out quick, going straight through the Perspex canopy which I had no time to open."

'BUTCHER BIRD'

Morzinek's last victory in 1941 was another Spitfire, on May 27, and by the end of the year he had flown 52 operations. His Staffel was withdrawn to re-equip with the Focke-Wulf Fw 190 – the 'Butcher Bird'. The unit reformed as 1/JG 2 and returned to operations at the end of April 1942.

He flew a total of 111 missions during the war – from May 1942 with the Fw 190 and, from March 1945, the Fw 190D-9. Shot down and wounded on March 6, 1944 (by which time he was with 7/JG 2), he did not return to operations until March 9, 1945. Willi Morzinek flew his last flight of the war on April 8, 1945. He was credited with a total of 15½ 'kills'.

SHORT AND SHARP

After fighter pilot training at Schleissheim, Lt Julius 'Jule' Meimberg was posted to 4/JG 2 on December 11, 1939. His war was quiet at first and not helped by an accident on May 11, 1940 which caused him minor injuries.

Eight days later he was back in the cockpit and scoring his first 'kill', a Hurricane near Tournai on May 19. Meimberg's second, and last in the Battle of France, was a French Curtiss Hawk near Eprenay on June



3. The following day he received the Iron Cross second class.

After being in hospital from September 26 to October 2, he managed to bag a Spitfire and two Hurricanes during the last weeks of the Battle of Britain. In November his tally increased with another Hurricane and Spitfire.

Meimberg shot down his first bomber on November 29, a Blenheim IV. Tasked with searching for his Geschwader Kommodore, Major Helmut Wick, who had been shot down the day before, Meimberg and another pilot were searching at very low level in bad weather when they stumbled across the 59 Squadron Blenheim flown by Fg Off Arthur Hovenier. The combat was short and sharp and all three crew, Hovenier and Sgts James Scotchmere and Lewis Magee, were killed.

DAYLIGHT BOMBERS

At the end of March 1941, Meimberg was posted to the Ergänzungsguppe (training section) of JG 2, returning to front line duties but with 3/JG 2 on April 15. His first victory of 1941 was a Spitfire on July 3, by which time he was 3/JG 2's Staffel Kapitän. Another Spitfire fell to his guns on July 17.

During a daylight attack on Brest by Bomber Command on July 24, Meimberg shot down two Hampdens and a Wellington but not without serious harm to



himself. The combat saw him run out of fuel and he was badly injured in the resulting crash-landing. He spent periods in hospital until the start of April 1942, during which time he was promoted to Oberleutnant and awarded the Ehrenpokal (honour goblet).

When Meimberg rejoined 3/JG 2 the unit was flying Fw 190s. In three months he downed five Spitfires, taking his total to 21 kills. The last of these was probably that of Flt Lt Henry Bowman DFC of 129 Squadron, on July 28, 1942.

Following the death in action of Oblt Rudi Pflanz on July 31, 1942, Meimberg was posted to command 11/JG 2, the so-called Höhenstaffel (high-altitude Staffel), flying the Bf 109G-1. On August 20 he shot down a Spitfire of 91 Squadron, flown by Plt Off Edwyn Tonge, and another on September 5. He was awarded the German Cross in Gold on October 29, 1942.

TAKING ON AMERICANS

Everything changed on November 4, 1942 when 11/JG 2 was deployed to North Africa. En route, Meimberg had to force-land his Bf 109G-1 at Mannheim, the aircraft suffering 25% damage.

Once established, 11/JG 2 became Stabstaffel (headquarters flight) II/JG 53 and Meimberg was quick to make his mark, shooting down three Bristol Bisleys – more often referred to as Blenheim Vs – on December 4 (the combat led to a

posthumous award of the Victoria Cross to Wg Cdr Hugh Malcolm). Meimberg added three Spitfires the day after and another the day after that.

On December 17 he returned to Germany to get married. Returning after Christmas he downed his first American aircraft, a P-38 Lightning, at high altitude over Tunis, on January 31, 1943. The aircraft was from the 3rd Photo Reconnaissance Group and flown by 2nd Lt Robert Young who baled out and was captured.

The day after, Meimberg shot down a B-17 Flying Fortress, only to fall victim to its rear gunner. With his Bf 109G-4/Trop on fire, he baled out, suffering burns to his hands and face. While in hospital, his victim from the day before, Robert Young, tried to visit him but the German was in such pain he refused, something he regretted for the rest of his life.

Hospitalised until the end of August 1943, Meimberg was then posted to Stab/JG 53. Because of his burns, he did not fly operationally until November and, despite shooting down a P-51 Mustang on December 9, 1943, was readmitted to hospital on January 31, 1944 for further attention to his hands.

UNARMED, UNESCORTED

Jule Meimberg was finally discharged from hospital on April 14, 1944, assuming

Clockwise from top left
Lorenz Dessoy, Rudi's Rottenführer on his last flight.

Left to right: Stfw Franz Willinger, Lt Oskar Ziesig and Fw Walter Ebert.

The Bf 109 flown by Helmut Wick, Kommodore of JG 2. Note the 'R' in a shield.

Sgt John Glendinning of 74 Squadron.





Above
Fw Horst Zettel, Ofw Josef Wurmheller, Fw Rhode and Willi Morzinek.

Above right
An unidentified, but evidently victorious, pilot of JG 2.

Right
The rudder of Helmut Wick's Bf 109 showing off 42 'kills'. He scored his 43rd on October 29, 1940.

Below
Stfw Franz Willinger in front of a Bf 109E of 8/JG 2.

command of II/JG 53 at Eschborn, near Frankfurt, on the 24th. He remained with the unit until the end of the war.

He was destined to bale out three more times – once because of a freak accident. On May 12, 1944 one of its own 30mm cannon shells exploded inside his Bf 109G-6. The second time, on December 26, 1944, his Bf 109G-14 was hit by debris from a P-47 Thunderbolt; and on April 17, 1945 he was brought down by flak. On the last two occasions he was wounded again.

Meimberg increased his tally of kills impressively: a B-24 Liberator, two B-17s, 13 P-47s, a P-38, a Typhoon, a P-51 and, as his 53rd and final victory, a Spitfire.



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



A claim on September 24, 1944 may have looked like a typing error in his records – a C-47. But post-war research confirmed this was Dakota KG653 of 1 Ferry Unit which got lost transporting 17 Canadian ground crew to Sardinia and ultimately India.

Its pilot, Flt Lt Ralph Korner, refused to land and what happened next saddened Meimberg, as he recorded in his memoirs: “There, in front of a blinding white wall of cloud, a tiny dot, a little higher than us on a parallel course. A twin-motor aircraft... strange... the wings look like those of a Focke-Wulf Fw 58 but [that] is smaller.

“We swing in towards it. It’s a type of aircraft which I’ve never seen before. The machine appears



to be unarmed. We’re very close now and suddenly I’m electrified. I recognise blue-white-red cockades on the fuselage and wings. An Englander! Is he crazy, flying on a sunny day through the middle of Germany – with no escort?

“I push the throttle forward as I want to try to force him to follow me. However, at that moment he must have seen us, as he curves towards the wall of clouds and is clearly attempting to escape us.

“Now I’m sitting behind him and fire a short burst at the starboard motor. I don’t want to shoot him down and therefore use just the two machine-guns, and not the cannon of my Me 109. The aircraft climbs steeply, rolls on its back and pulls into a dive.

“It picks up so much speed in the dive that its structural limits are exceeded when the enemy pilot tries to pull out. One of the wings rips away from the fuselage with a jerk and tumbles to earth like a leaf while the rest plunges down, with no parachutes blossoming. We follow the steep spiral until the aircraft strikes the ground. I do not feel at all like myself. I give the order to return.”

A month later Jule Meimberg was awarded the Ritterkreuz – but the deaths of 20 aircrew and passengers in his 41st kill sickened this fighter pilot, who had been in almost constant action since just before Christmas 1939. He had seen more than his fair share of death and sorrow. ✚

Above left
Willi Morzinek with a member of his ground crew on the cowling of his new Fw 190.

Above
Personnel of 4/JG 2 in late 1940. Back row, left to right: Georg Bock (killed June 23, 1941), Jule Meimberg, Heinz Bolze (killed June 24, 1941) and Willi Morzinek. Front, left to right: Geffr Plenkens, Lorenz Dessoy, Helmut Schönnemann (killed July 24, 1941) and Geffr Jäschken (not with 4/JG 2).

Below
Jule Meimberg on his Bf 109. He made his fifth kill on September 6, 1940.



Jule Meimberg and Assi Hahn.



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



TWICE *Dead*

DURING 1940 THE MEN AND MACHINES OF 82 SQUADRON WERE DECIMATED TWICE IN THE FACE OF FIERCE OPPOSITION. **GRAHAM PITCHFORK** TELLS THE STORY OF THE UNIT THAT REFUSED TO DIE

As the German blitzkrieg raced through the Low Countries and into France on May 10, 1940 it was immediately apparent that the light bombers of the Advanced Air Striking Force were easy prey to the Luftwaffe's fighters and anti-aircraft batteries. By the end of the first day of operations, 13 Fairey Battles had been lost and the pattern of crippling losses over the next few days had been established.

When the scale of the massive German offensive became clear on May 11, the Blenheim IV units of 2 Group were placed on readiness. During the day, the crews of 21 and 110 Squadrons attacked bridges and armoured columns.

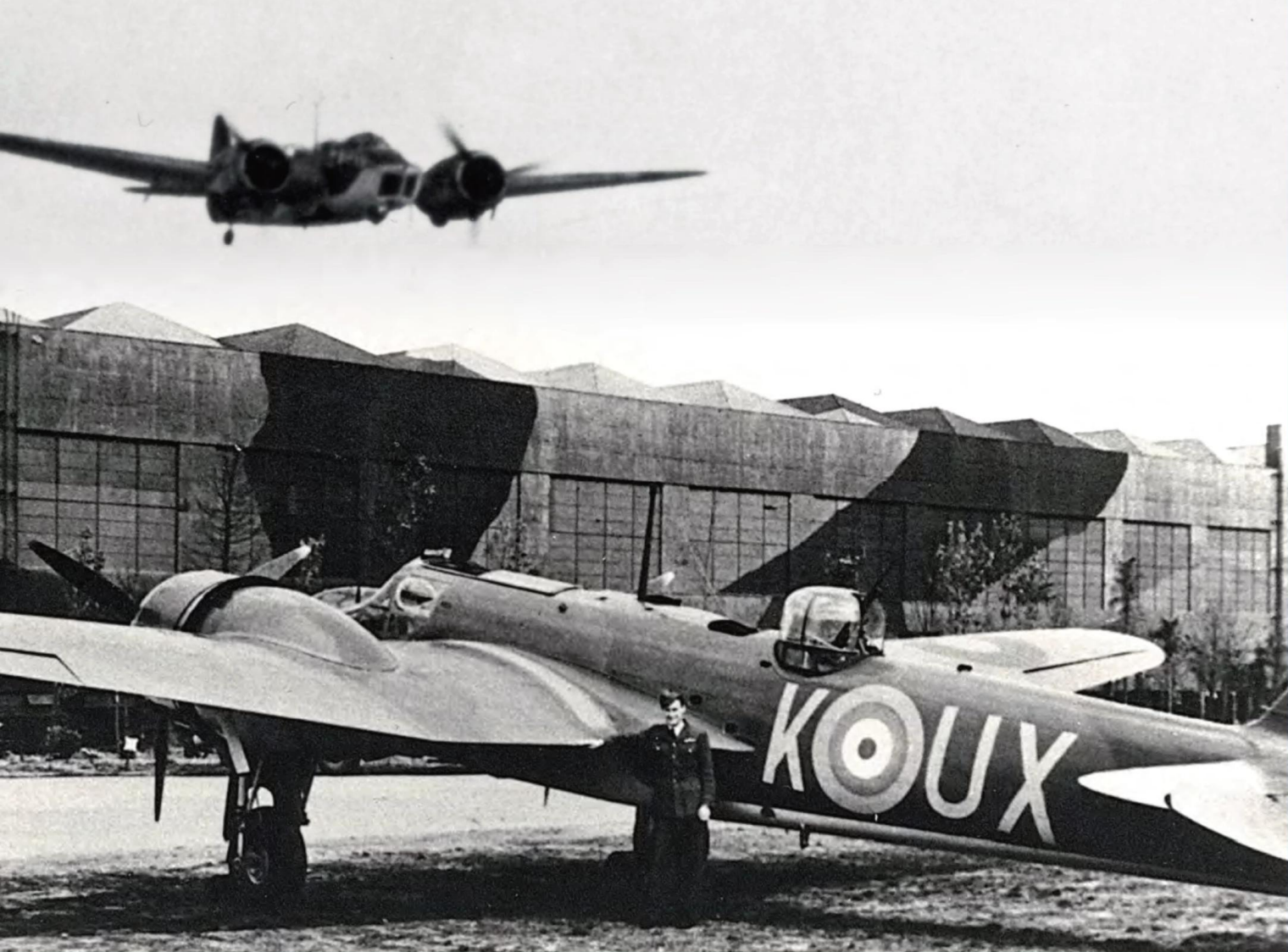
On the 12th there was an urgent requirement to destroy the bridges over the canal and the river at Maastricht, and Blenheims were tasked for this. Twelve crews of 107 Squadron, led by their CO Wg

Cdr Basil Embry, took off at 08:10. (More about Embry in *On the Run* on page 46.) They ran into intense flak before enemy fighters arrived. Four of the Blenheims failed to return.

Next it was the turn of 15 Squadron and its losses were even greater with six of the 12 crews lost. No.110 Squadron got through to the bridges and registered a hit, but only superficial damage was caused. Two crews were lost. ➤

Left
Blenheim IVs en route to a target. KEC

Below
A Blenheim IV of 82 Squadron at Watton.



Right

The Earl of Bandon (second from left) with some of his crews. Only Sqd Ldr P Sutcliffe (left) survived the May massacre of 82 Squadron.

NORMAN FRANKS



Below

Blenheim IVs of 82 Squadron lined up at Watton.

In the meantime, a valiant effort by Battles of 12 Squadron, which led to the award of the first air VCs of World War Two, ended in tragic failure.

At Watton in Norfolk, 82 Squadron had been on standby all day; finally taking off at 19:30 to hit the approaches to the bridges. Unlike earlier raids, all the crews returned to their base at Watton.

FIERCE BARRAGE

There was some respite for the 2 Group Blenheims on May 13

but they were back in action the following day. During the afternoon, 17 set off from Wattisham headed for France, this time with a fighter escort. They were followed later by 21 Squadron. Losses continued and by the end of the day, five Blenheims had been shot down, two had to force land and at least five were damaged.

No.82 Squadron was next in action during the afternoon of the 15th. Led by its CO, Wg Cdr the Earl of Bandon, 12 aircraft took off to

attack enemy troop concentrations at Montherme. With the benefit of a fighter escort, all returned safely.

The next operation by 82 proved to be very different. It was still dark on the morning of May 17 when 12 crews assembled in the briefing room at Watton. German panzer forces had made great advances overnight and orders came through to take off for a dawn raid in an attempt to stop further thrusts into France.



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



"...the Bf 109s, led by Lt Gerhard Sprenger, tore into the lightly armed Blenheims and steadily picked them off."

Their target was in the Gembloux Gap.

The Earl of Bandon briefed his crews. Assigned to lead the force was the flight commander, Sqn Ldr Miles Delap, who had recently been awarded the DFC for the first successful attack against a U-boat earlier in the year.

The dozen Blenheims took off at 04:45 and headed for Tangmere hoping to pick up a Hurricane escort. The fighters failed to materialise and the force was ordered to proceed unescorted. They crossed the English Channel at 8,000ft (2,438m) and headed for a small town near Namur.

As the Blenheims approached the target area the ground defences were alerted and they loosed off a fierce barrage, which accounted for Fg Off R J McConnell's aircraft. The others started to take evasive action, which resulted in their formations splitting up.

A LONE BLENHEIM

The anti-aircraft fire ended abruptly as 15 Messerschmitt Bf 109Es of 1/JG 3 appeared. Delap ordered the crews to regain formation but it was too late and the Bf 109s, led by Lt Gerhard

Sprenger, tore into the lightly armed Blenheims and steadily picked them off. The German pilots claimed to have shot down 12 but only ten fell to their guns. The 12th aircraft, flown by Sgt 'Jock' Morrison was damaged, but he managed to escape.

No Blenheim had reached the target. Sprenger and his colleague Lt Karl Haberland each claimed to have destroyed three aircraft.

Two hours later, a lone Blenheim arrived back at Watton. The Earl of Bandon and his personnel stood aghast when it was realised that the rest had all been lost. Thirty-three men were missing. In the event, 20 had died, three had become prisoners of war and the remainder managed to reach safety, some wounded.

Later in the day, Bandon called his few remaining crews together and told them they were all that was left of the squadron. Shortly afterwards he received a signal from HQ 2 Group telling him to disband, but the charismatic Irish Earl fought the decision and was soon allowed to rebuild the unit. He was determined that the courage of the men who died should live on in a new 82 Squadron.

DEFENDING DUNKIRK

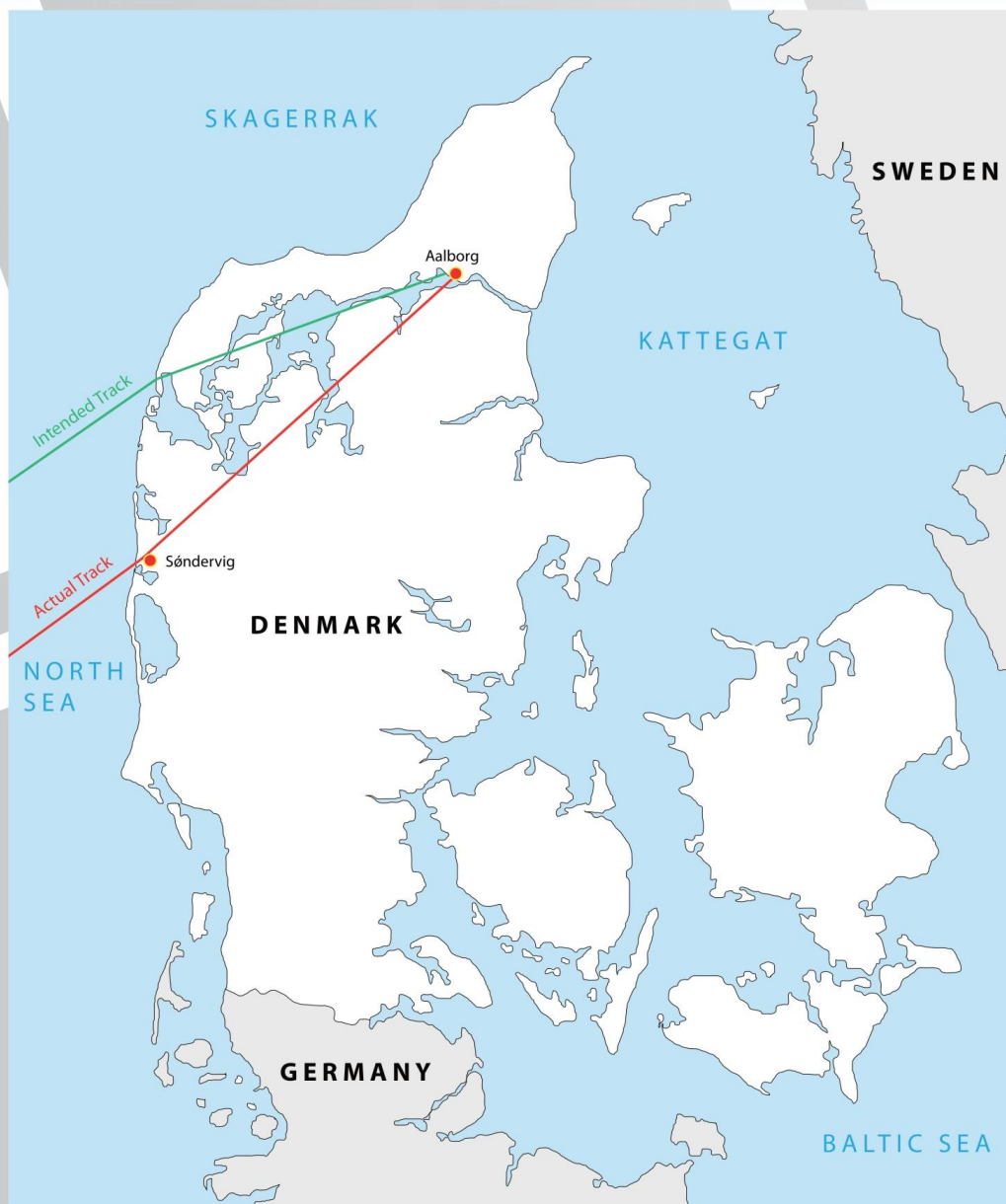
Within days, new crews and aircraft arrived and on May 20, Bandon declared 82 operational again. That evening, he led six Blenheims to strike at enemy armour in the west of Belgium. Remarkably, and thanks to the drive and determination of the Earl, the unit was back in business.

The following day, Sqn Ldr W P Sutcliffe led a force of six Blenheims to attack enemy columns on the Boulogne-Etaples road. With the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) retreating to the Channel ports, 82 continued to hit German columns, tanks and road transports. The Earl led the squadron on some of these, including an attack on pontoon bridges near Courtrai.

As the BEF withdrew into the Dunkirk area, the Blenheims of 2 Group continued to bomb the advancing German units. On May 27 six aircraft of 82 Squadron, led by Sutcliffe, set fire to warehouses holding supplies and then struck at armour near Arques.

On May 28, 29 and 30, the Blenheims of 82 Squadron raided targets near the Dunkirk perimeter and around Dixmunde, flying at very low level. With the final ➤

Above
Messerschmitt Bf 109Es
of 5/JG 77 on standby at
Rordal.



phase of the withdrawal of the BEF, the unit was in action until the final day when it launched at dawn to bomb gun batteries and to machine-gun the enemy from low level.

The Earl of Bandon's 'new 82' had proved its merit and ability as one of 2 Group's frontline squadrons.

FALL OF FRANCE

The evacuation from Dunkirk did not spell the end of 'ops' for the Blenheims and 82 was out in force with other squadrons attacking the German advance deeper into France. On June 5, in addition to hitting targets in France, Blenheims began to take on longer range sorties into Holland and Germany and the Air Office Commanding of 2 Group announced that raids would be made "only when cloud cover gives adequate security".

However, the greatest air effort was still directed against targets in France. No.82 attacked troop concentrations near Abbeville on June 8. The following day the unit teamed up with the Wyton Blenheims to bomb roads and railways. This was in an attempt to slow down the German advance before the final evacuation of the BEF from Le Havre and St Valery.

On June 12, the withdrawal of the remaining British forces from Le Havre was complete and the only remaining units were south of the River Seine. There was no indication that French forces would contain the advancing Germans and a major air effort to support the ground forces was mounted on the 13th.

Blenheims attacked the road system and motor transports. During the afternoon, 82 launched nine aircraft, led by Flt Lt L V E Atkinson, to bomb river crossings and approaches to the Seine. Three Blenheims were shot down with the loss of three aircrew with two others captured.

With the fall of France on the 14th, ops by 2 Group's Blenheims almost ceased. No.82 Squadron flew the last raid by Blenheims on the 18th when Philip Sutcliffe, who had recently been awarded the DFC, led six aircraft against armoured vehicles on the roads south of Cherbourg.

On June 22 the French accepted the armistice terms – the Battle of France was over. The Blenheim squadrons had suffered heavy losses, none more so than 82.

CLOUD COVER OFFENSIVE

No.82 opened the 'cloud-cover' offensive on June 21 and turned its



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



attention to the enemy-occupied airfields and industrial and power plants. This included a successful surprise attack against Abbeville airfield.

During June, the Earl of Bandon became the station commander at Watton and 38-year-old Wg Cdr Edward Collis de Virac Lart replaced him. A few days later, it was announced that the Earl had been awarded the DSO for his, 'gallantry and devotion to duty'.

On the 3rd, Operation Instruction No.38 was issued extending the campaign to concentrated attacks against captured airfields in the Low Countries and France. Some squadrons raided airfields in Norway but 82 targeted airfields in northern Holland and France.

On July 28, Lart led a daring low-level attack against Leeuwarden airfield in northern Holland. His gunner, Sgt A S Beeby, shot down a Bf 109E of II/JG 27, an action that resulted in him being awarded the DFM.

STRATEGIC TARGET

Twelve crews of 82 made an attempt to bomb Hamstede from 20,000ft on August 7, but too

much cloud thwarted it. Six days later, on the 13th, the squadron was tasked with a repeat of this tactic. The target was Aalborg airfield in northern Denmark, which was a strategic base for Luftwaffe transports en route to Norway, and where bombers were massed to raid Britain.

In good weather, 12 Blenheims took off from Watton at 08:45 and formed up into two sections. The squadron commander, Lart, led 'A' Flight followed by the six of Sqn Ldr 'Rusty' Wardell's 'B' Flight.

The bombers climbed to height and headed on a direct track for the Danish coast due west of Aalborg. There was good cloud cover and their approach was undetected until they reached the coast.

The leader's aircraft had steered a few degrees south and the radio silence prevented the rest of the formation alerting him. As they neared Denmark, one Blenheim had to turn back with fuel problems.

The formation coasted in at Søndervig, around 30 miles (48km) south of the intended turning point. The cloud also disappeared and the crews expected Lart to

turn back in accordance with the 'cloud cover' policy but he pressed on and the formation followed. The 11 Blenheims faced a much longer track over the mainland of Denmark.

NO ESCAPE

Below, the personnel of Flafwache 8 at Søndervig had detected them. The Luftwaffe's air defence system was alerted and eight Bf 109Es of 5/JG 77, led by Oblt Erich Friedrich, took off from Rordal a few miles east of Aalborg. The flak batteries of 15/Lg-Nachr-Regiment 11 on the airfield came to immediate readiness.

Lart and his section managed to penetrate the anti-aircraft fire, some dropping their bombs before turning northwest to escape. As they departed to the north, the German fighters immediately set on them and over the next few minutes all six were shot down.

Plt Off B Newland and his crew were the first to go, only Newland surviving. Next was the flight commander and Old Cranwellian, Sqn Ldr Norman Jones whose gunner, Sgt John Bristow, was the only survivor. Almost at the ➤

Clockwise from top left

The location of Aalborg, a vital staging post for transports flying to Norway and for bombers raiding Britain. The planned track of the 82 Squadron raid and the actual show how much more enemy-occupied, and heavily defended territory the Blenheims had to cross.

PETE WEST © 2015

Blenheim R3800 shot down by flak into the waters off Aalborg.

One of R 3800's crew is helped ashore by German soldiers.

"Lart and his section managed to penetrate the anti-aircraft fire, some dropping their bombs before turning northwest to escape. As they departed to the north, the German fighters immediately set on them and over the next few minutes all six were shot down."

Below
*Lt Col Friedrich saluting
the successful pilots of
5/JG 77.*

same time, Flt Lt Ron Ellen was shot down. He and his gunner escaped by parachute.

Heading west, Plt O C W Wigley and his crew perished. Moments later, Wg Cdr Lart and his crew died. Last of 'A' Flight was Sgt John Oates who had managed to fly further west but his aircraft had been severely damaged and, at 12:30, he was forced to crash land near Vust.

Oates and his observer were badly injured but his gunner escaped unscathed. He remained with the wreck burning papers until the German authorities arrived at the scene.

MASSACRE

Following behind the first section were the five Blenheims of 'Rusty' Wardell's 'B' Flight. The flak gunners had found their range and put up a fierce barrage. In broad daylight and perfect summer weather, the massacre

of the formation was played out in front of those on the air base and the eyewitnesses in the surrounding town.

Flt Lt T E Symes and his crew were the first to fall. Symes and his observer, Sgt K Wright, managed to bale out and they came down in the sea just south of the island of Egholm, near the town of Aalborg. German soldiers waded into the sea to bring the two men ashore.

Plt Off Parfitt's aircraft was hit and only one parachute was seen to stream but it caught up on the airframe. Sgt Youngs, the observer, died with his colleagues.

Sgt Blair's Blenheim was hit and an engine caught fire. He managed to ditch and his aircraft was very badly damaged in the impact. It was a miracle that anyone could survive but all three men, albeit severely injured, were brought ashore by Danish villagers.

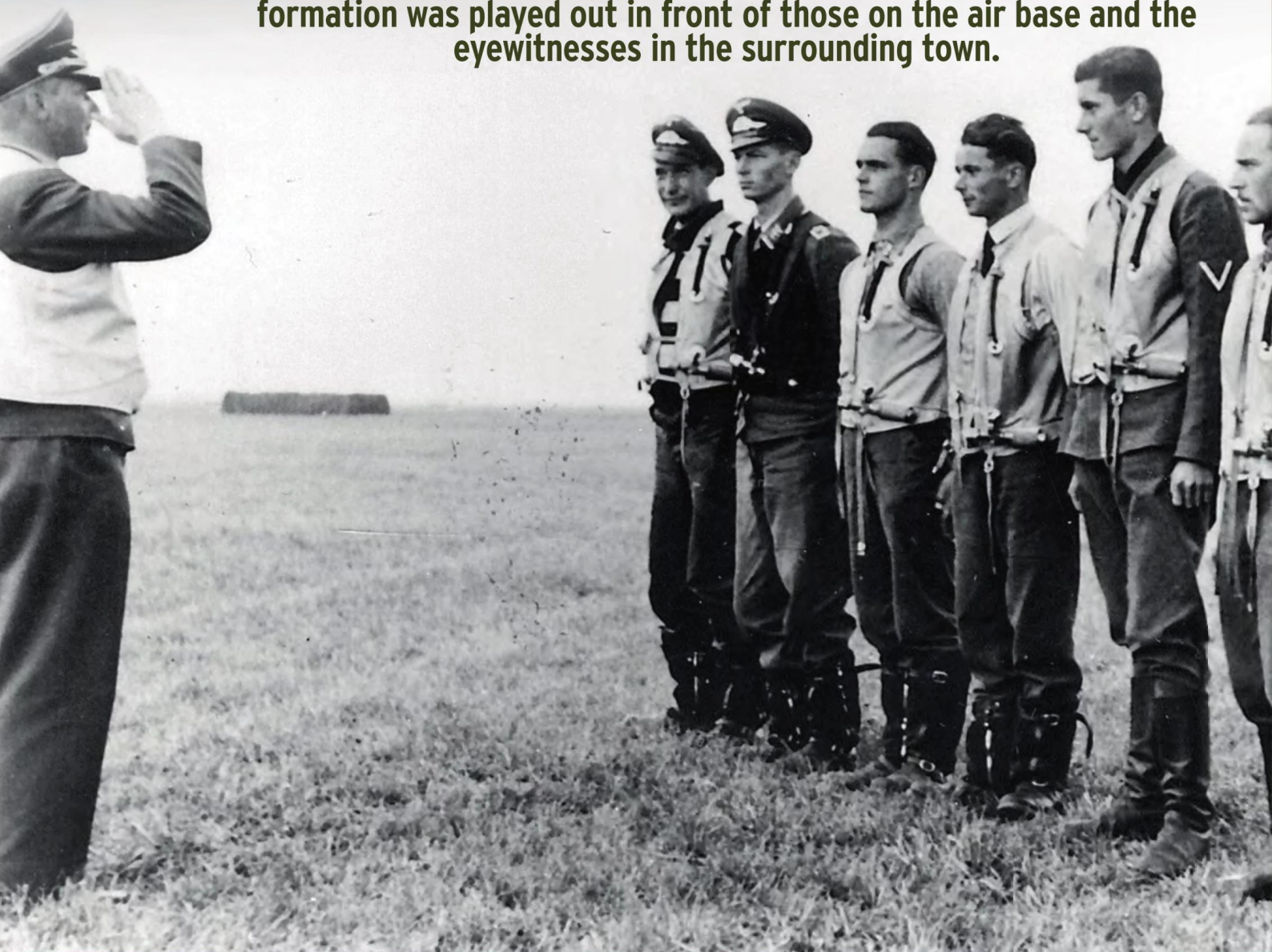
Within minutes, Plt Off E R Hale and his crew were killed and 'Rusty' Wardell was shot down. He was the only survivor from his aircraft.

The survivors, some badly injured, were cared for the German authorities and the local Danish people. Only 13 of the 33 men who set off on the ill-fated operation survived to become prisoners. For the second time in three months, 82 Squadron had been decimated.

The pilots of 5/JG 77 had shot down six of the Blenheims. Uffz Robert Menge accounting for three of them.

Early on the morning of August 16, the 20 who had lost their lives were buried at Vadum Cemetery with full military honours. Although they were the enemy, the Germans recognised the gallantry and sacrifice of the Blenheim crews and paid them the ultimate respect.

In broad daylight and perfect summer weather, the massacre of the formation was played out in front of those on the air base and the eyewitnesses in the surrounding town.



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



and he spent the rest of the war as a prisoner. When the facts were known after the war, Len Trent was also awarded the VC.

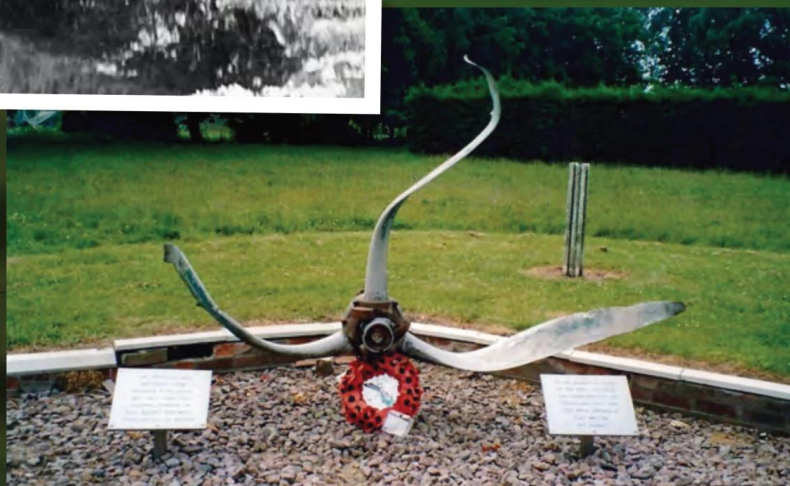
SEEKING VENGEANCE?

Why Lart decided to press on will never be known. At 38 he was of the old school having joined the RAF in 1923 after completing his education at Cambridge University. He had served with distinction on India's North West Frontier where he was mentioned-in-despatches. At this early stage of the war, the majority of squadron commanders rarely flew on operations – Lart was one of the few exceptions.

Five days before the attack on Aalborg, Lart had learnt that his brother, a captain in the Royal Army

Left
Military honours at
Vadum Cemetery on
August 16, 1940.

Left
A propeller salvaged
from R3800 as a
memorial at Watton to
the fallen aircrew.
ALL IMAGES VIA AUTHOR



PRESSING ON

Among the survivors there was surprise that Lart did not abandon the operation when the cloud disappeared over the Danish coast. He was not the only squadron commander leading a large formation to press on against overwhelming odds.

On December 4, 1942, Wg Cdr Hugh Malcolm led his 12 Bisleys (also called Blenheim Vs) on a close support mission in Algeria. Meeting intense opposition, Malcolm pressed on with the survivors and his aircraft was one of the last to be shot down when he was 15 miles from the target. He was later posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. (See *Richtshofen Kameraden* on page 70.)

Five months later, on May 3, 1943 Sqn Ldr Len Trent led 12 Lockheed Venturas of 487 (RNZAF) Squadron to raid the Royal Dutch Shell Steel Works at IJmuiden. The formation met a murderous barrage and Trent and one other were the only two to reach the target.

Trent was the last to be shot down

Medical Corps, had been killed in action. With a reputation for leading his men from the front, and with the knowledge that the raid on Aalborg would be fraught, it was perhaps inevitable that he would choose to be the leader. With the loss of his brother very fresh, perhaps he was intent in avenging his death.

In July 1941 it was announced that Lart had been awarded the DSO: "for gallantry and devotion to duty in the execution of air operations". The citation made special mention of his attack against Leeuwarden airfield but, with it coming long after his death, it seems entirely likely that recognition was also being made for his gallantry over Aalborg once all the facts of the raid had become clear.

No.82 Squadron arose again under its third CO in a matter of a few weeks, to continue the fight in 2 Group and on a detachment to Malta. In the early part of 1942 it left for India and later operated Vultee Vengeance dive-bombers, which it used to great effect. ✚



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



TOKEN

Effort

DANIEL FORD OUTLINES ITALY'S BRIEF PART IN THE BATTLE OF
BRITAIN AND THE PEDIGREE OF HENDON'S FIAT

Above
With RAF roundels and
serial number, the Falco
was briefly assessed
by British pilots.
PETER GREEN COLLECTION

Right
The Fiat is on show in the
Battle of Britain Hall at
the RAF Museum, Hendon.

Far right
Fiat CR.42 MM5701 on its
nose, under guard, on
the beach at Orfordness,
November 1940. KEC

In the second week of September 1940, a force of Fiat CR.42 Falco biplane fighters and twin-engined BR.20 Cicogna bombers was formed up as a blatant piece of opportunism. Despatched by Italian leader Benito Mussolini to airfields in Belgium, they were to allow Italy to play its part in the Battle of Britain. Determined to prove that he was an equal partner in the Rome-Berlin Axis, Mussolini was sending a token force when it looked as though the battle had gone the Luftwaffe's way.

German commanders were outraged at the gesture; while Hitler felt it underlined that the founder of Fascism had been reduced to a very junior role. Fighter Command knew that statistically 'Il Duce' had missed the boat; when planning the deployment, things must have looked favourable, but the tables had



"Determined to prove that he was an equal partner in the Rome-Berlin Axis, Mussolini was sending a token force when it looked as though the battle had gone the Luftwaffe's way."

LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

turned. Hurricane and Spitfire pilots found the oddly-marked, poorly-performing machines, easy pickings.

Mussolini's expeditionary force was the Corpo Aereo Italiano (CAI) and CR.42 MM5701 of the 18° Gruppo, 56° Stormo, 95^a Squadriglia settled into Maldegem in Belgium on October 6, 1940. CAI fell under the reluctant command of the German Luftflotte 2.

NOSE DOWN AND CAPTURED

On November 11 a force of around 20 CR.42s was escorting ten BR.20s to raid Harwich, Suffolk. En route, Sergente Pilota Pietro Salvadori's MM5701 suffered engine problems and he force-landed it on the beach at Orfordness; the biplane ending

up on its nose. As Salvadori started life as a prisoner of war; MM5701 was being dismantled and taken to nearby Martlesham Heath.

With Hurricanes shepherding, the repaired Falco was flown to the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough, Hampshire, and there was painted in RAF markings and given the serial BT474. As it was hardly cutting-edge, RAE spent little time flying the biplane and on April 28, 1941 it was issued to the Air Fighting Development Unit at Duxford, so that tactics could be developed should CR.42s be encountered in combat again.

In December 1942 the Air Historical Branch (AHB) expressed interest in keeping BT474 for posterity and followed this up in

the New Year with instructions that it be crated and stored. It was at 49 Maintenance Unit, Colerne, in 1960 for refurbishing. By 1968 it was with the station museum at St Athan, Wales, in the mid-1970s had acquired 95^a Squadriglia colours; moving to the RAF Museum at Hendon in October 1978. +

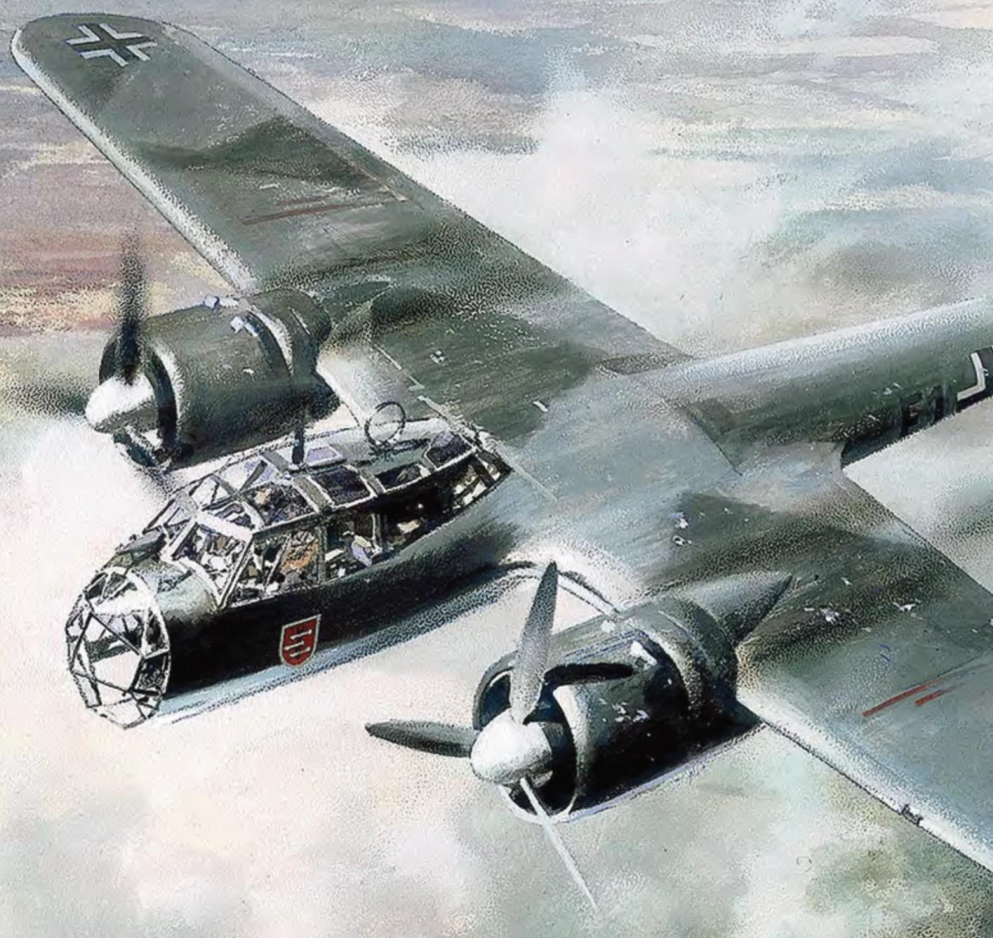


FLÜGEL DES ADLERS

TURNING

CHRIS GOSS TELLS THE STORIES OF THREE GERMAN AIRCRAFT SHOT DOWN
DURING THE CRUCIAL AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 15, 1940

Point



"The Germans flew more than 1,000 sorties that day and, although the RAF claimed to have shot down 183, the losses actually numbered 56 bombers and fighters..."

LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

Sunday, September 15, 1940 saw the climax of the Battle of Britain when the Luftwaffe launched a massive series of attacks against London in the hope of finally defeating the Hurricanes and Spitfires of RAF Fighter Command. The Germans flew more than 1,000 sorties that day and, although the RAF claimed to have shot down 183, the losses actually numbered 56 bombers and fighters while many aircraft returned to occupied Europe badly damaged.

The first attack of the day came at about 11:00 when fighter-bombers of II/LG 2 struck the capital. This was a relatively new idea for the Germans which, as Oblt Viktor Krafft of Stab II/LG 2 recalled, was not regarded as fair:

"A British newspaper wrote when our Gruppe flew for the first time over Kent: 'Today flew a group of German fighters over Kent and London. Nobody had expected they were carrying bombs but they did so. It is not fair to fly like a fighter and then drop bombs like a bomber.'

"I should say that we didn't do it because we were unfair; it was just a new development as is usual in war!"

DESPERATE ACTION

Twenty minutes after the fighter-bombers departed, Dornier Do 17s of I and II/KG 76 appeared over London's suburbs. Their target was either the docks or the railway junction at Latchmere End but, owing to the massive number of

Hurricanes and Spitfires sent to intercept them, damage was slight and as they turned for home their casualties began to rise.

One of the most spectacular and well known losses was a Do17 flown by Oblt Robert Zehbe of 1/KG 76. Attacked by swarms of RAF fighters, it was claimed shot down by *at least* six RAF pilots. Sgt Ray Holmes of 504 Squadron rammed the bomber with his Hurricane. The Dornier broke up, most of the wreckage falling on Victoria Railway Station.

The German crew tried to bale out of the disintegrating bomber. Two of them, Obgf Ludwig Armbruster and Uffz Leo Hammermeister, were captured. Robert Zehbe managed to land by parachute. He died of his injuries the following day. ➤

Below left
'Battle over London', a superb depiction by Geoff Nutkins of Sgt Ray Holmes of 504 Squadron ramming the Do 17 flown by 1/KG 76's Oblt Robert Zehbe. COURTESY GEOFF NUTKINS - WWW.AVIARTNUTKINS.COM

Inset: Zehbe's Do 17 disintegrating over London. CHRIS GOSS COLLECTION



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS

Below
A Bf 109E-4/B with a
250kg bomb in France at
the end of the Battle of
Britain.

Uffz Gustav Hubel and Uffz Hans Goschenhofer were both killed.

Fw Rolf Heitsch of 8/KG 76 was on the right of his formation of bombers and, after a turn, found himself at the rear – much easier prey for RAF fighters. “They attacked us from behind. Trying to take evasive action by flying up and down, they hit us with three bursts with the result that we only had limited power from the engines.

“The right engine was totally destroyed and the left one just idling. We managed to get between two clouds and had to force-land in a field which was occupied by cows at their midday rest. When the plane came to a halt, we could not get out as the exits had been so badly damaged by gunfire.”

Credit for shooting Rolf down was given to Fg Off John Dundas and Plt Off Eugene Tobin of 609 Squadron (see page 18). KG 76 lost six bombers on this sortie with another two badly damaged. Twelve aircrew were killed, ten captured and three wounded.

TAKING TO THE SILK

The escorts also fared badly. Fw Herbert Tzschoppe of 1/JG 53 had already flown in the Battle of France, his Messerschmitt Bf 109 being damaged in combat with Hurricanes of 1 Squadron at 15:45 on May 14, forcing him to crash-land near Sedan.

Herbert's first ‘kill’ was not until the Battle of Britain had well and truly started when, on August 25, he shot down two Hurricanes off Portland, Dorset. His third and last victory was on September 9 when he shot down another Hurricane to the east of London.

Six days later Tzschoppe's luck ran out as he recalled: “On September 15, 1940, I, with Uffz Heinrich Kopperschläger, was one of the last of the Staffel to take off. We were to fly as the lookout pair. We flew at the back of the escort formation.

“The Staffel Kapitän, Oblt Hans Ohly, had to turn back with radio trouble and the lead was then given to Obfw Alfred Müller. We were flying at

about 3,500m and had to fly with our flaps down so that we could stay close to the slower bombers.

“During a turn we were attacked by Spitfires which came out of the sun. Müller was hit in the arm and broke away and my plane was hit in both wings. I wanted to get back to France and tried to hide in the clouds which were at 1,500m.

“When I came out of the clouds I was hit by a second burst, so I threw off the cabin roof and undid my seat belt. I now think the drills I learned in flying training then saved my life. We were often woken up at night and had to say what to do if we were hit: throw off the roof, undo the seat belts, jump out and pull ripcord.

“A third burst hit home – from the instrument panel came flames like an oxyacetylene torch and my hands and face were severely burned.

An explosion followed and I found myself hanging on a parachute.”



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

Below left
Rolf Heitsch's Do 17 Z in a field at Lullingstone, Kent.



"It is not fair to fly like a fighter and then drop bombs like a bomber. I should say that we didn't do it because we were unfair; it was just a new development as is usual in war!"

Uffz Hans Figge managed to get his crippled Do 17 of 2/KG 76 almost as far as the French city of Poix. With one engine stopped after a fighter attack, he successfully crash-landed and the crew clambered out.



by parachute. The pilot came to earth at the edge of a wood near to where we were standing. He surrendered to us and unloaded his pistol and handed it to us.

"We handed him over to a detachment of New Zealand soldiers who quickly appeared on the scene – this would have been about two or three miles from where the Me 109 crashed at Adisham Court [near Canterbury]. The victorious Spitfire over flew us after we had apprehended the German pilot."

Below
The crew of Dornier 'Fl+FL' of 3/KG 76 immediately before take-off on September 15, 1940. A few hours later, the bomber crashed at Sturry in Kent. Left to right: Fw Karl Niebler (pilot - killed); Oblt Karl-Ernst Wilke (observer - PoW), Fw Karl-Heinz Wissmann (gunner - killed), a ground crewman, Uffz Johann-Friedrich Schatz (gunner - killed) and Uffz Hans Zenner (radio operator - PoW).

SHORT AND TO-THE-POINT

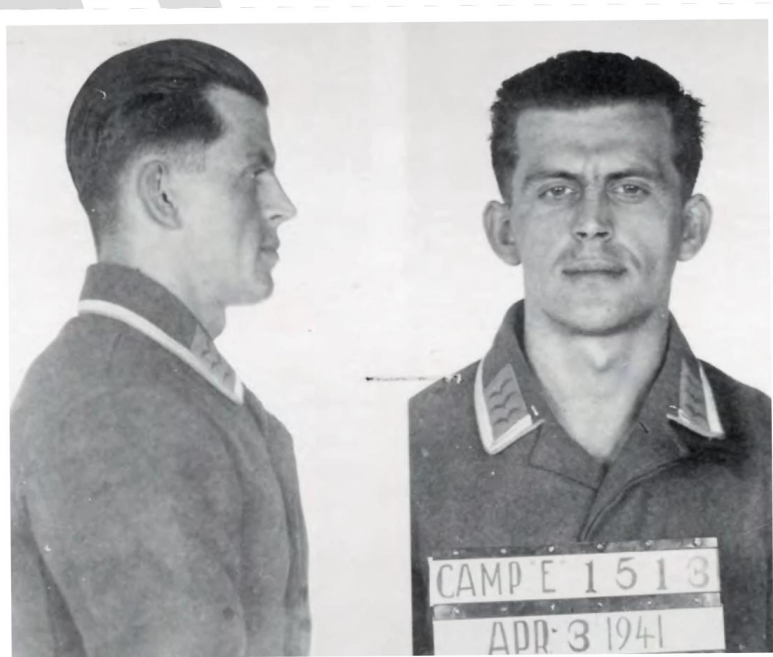
Tzschoppe had been 'bounced' by Plt Off Tony Lovell of 41 Squadron whose short and to-the-point combat report said: "Flying as *Blue 2*, [we] broke up to attack Me 109s which were attacking us. [I] sighted my Me 109 turning east and diving. I dived after him and chased him for some 15 miles in and out of cloud.

"After the first burst, white fumes came from his port wing root but he carried on. I gave him two more bursts and he caught fire and I saw him bale out and being attended to on the ground."

The German's demise was watched from the ground by 18-year-old John Sampson: "We heard the sound of aerial combat and then saw someone descending



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



"We were flying at about 3,500m and had to fly with our flaps down so that we could stay close to the slower bombers."

Above
Fw Herbert Tzschoppe of
1/JG 53.

Above right
Herbert Tzschoppe as a
prisoner of war.

Below
A Bf 109E-4 of 1/JG 53.

Herbert's recollections perfectly match John's account: "Two Spitfires circled me at full bank – the first pilot saluted and I did the same. I came down in a mixed forest and I got hung up in a tree about 5ft from the ground. I released myself from the parachute and landed heavily, hurting my knees. Two youths and, shortly after that, soldiers appeared and I was taken prisoner."

Losses for 1/JG 53 were heavy that afternoon. In addition to Herbert Tzschoppe and Alfred Müller (who ditched in the sea and was captured),

1/JG 53 suffered another aircraft badly damaged in combat which was able to crash-land back in France.

Of the rest of the Geschwader, 2/JG 53 lost its Staffel Kapitän, Oblt Rudolf Schmidt, and Uffz Hans Schersand (both were killed) while 3/JG 53 also lost its Staffel Kapitän, Oblt Julius Haase, and Uffz Karl-Heinz Feldmann; Haase was killed and Feldmann captured.

WELCOMING BARRAGE

The next attack of September 15 was against the Royal Victoria, West

India and Surrey Commercial Docks in east London. The raiders were Do 17s of II and III/KG 2, and II/KG 3, together with Heinkel He 111s of I and II/KG 53 and I and II/KG 26. Flying in three parallel columns 3 miles (4.8km) apart, 114 bombers approached the docks.

Throwing themselves at the bombers and their escorts, RAF fighters engaged in dogfights over much of Kent, London, East Sussex and Essex. London was spared serious damage as when the Germans arrived overhead they



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



Below left
One of the Do 17s that managed to make it back from the later afternoon attack was '5K+AM' of 4/KG 3. With its starboard engine stopped and port engine struggling, Lt Sieghard Schopper managed to crash-land the Dornier on sand dunes at Mardyck, east of Calais.

found their targets obscured by cloud.

One of the escorting fighters was flown by Uffz August Klik of 2/LG 2 who recalled the fighter defences: "Before we reached Tonbridge, heavy AA [anti-aircraft] fire welcomed us and the sky began to cloud over. Then the sky was full of British fighters.

"The first Gruppe of bombers was torn apart and disappeared into protective cloud. During the subsequent air battle, we were pushed away to the east and the

variable amount of cloud and the tumult of battle made it difficult to tell friend from foe."

German losses were high – KG 2 suffered eight Do 17s destroyed and seven damaged with 19 aircrew killed, nine captured and ten wounded. KG 3's toll was six aircraft destroyed and four damaged with 15 aircrew killed, ten captured and four wounded. The He 111s fared no better – seven destroyed, five damaged, 12 aircrew killed, 22 captured and six wounded in both units.

FATAL MISTAKE

Having bounced a Hurricane, August Klik made the fatal mistake of following his victim only to have the tables turned, possibly by Fg Off Leonard Haines of 19 Squadron.

Klik managed to get into cloud and took stock of the situation: "All instruments showed normal readings – only the radiator temperature was alarmingly high. It was getting hot in the cockpit and when I tried to put the locking pin of the cockpit hood into its ➤

Below
Alfred Müller (second from right) was shot down and captured on September 15.



FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



Above
Uffz Hans Schersand
of 2/JG 53, killed on
September 15.

Below
Pilots of JG 53 as
prisoners of war in
Canada. The two captured
on September 15, 1940 are
Uffz Karl-Heinz Feldmann
of 3/JG 53 (sitting second
from right) and Herbert
Tzschoppe (sitting second
from left).

second notch, the canopy suddenly flew off.

"The cloud bank had come to an end and below me was the Thames Estuary. Because of the combats around Maidstone and the bombers having been pushed away, much fuel had been used; the red fuel warning lamp began to flicker.

"There were three options to be considered: baling out, force-landing or flying out to sea and being fished out by a German air-sea rescue aircraft. Third option was not worth

the risk; first option only in an emergency as a few days earlier we had been warned not to bale out as Polish pilots shot at every parachute over the coastal area.

"The engine was only at 880rpm so I turned towards dry land and made a smooth landing on an island in the Thames Estuary. After five minutes, Home Guards came and took away my sunglasses, watch and pistol. In return for these they offered me a bottle of beer.

"I was then taken to a fort at



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES



Sheerness and together with some other prisoners went to Chatham. Later that evening we were taken to Hyde Park for interrogation. Just as we arrived, London was receiving another bombing raid.”

POSTPONEMENT

That Sunday was a turning point in the Battle of Britain. The Luftwaffe had lost 56 bombers and fighters for the RAF's 28 – 12 pilots of which were killed, 12 wounded and one, Sgt John Potter of 19 Squadron, captured.

London had been bombed but rail traffic was disrupted for just three days while the docks – this time – were unscathed. From a German viewpoint, failing to meet objectives, coupled with the casualties, meant the day was a failure.

September 15 proved that RAF Fighter Command was not on its knees. German attacks began to switch to the night and, on the 19th, Adolf Hitler postponed Operation Sea Lion – the proposed invasion of Great Britain. ✚



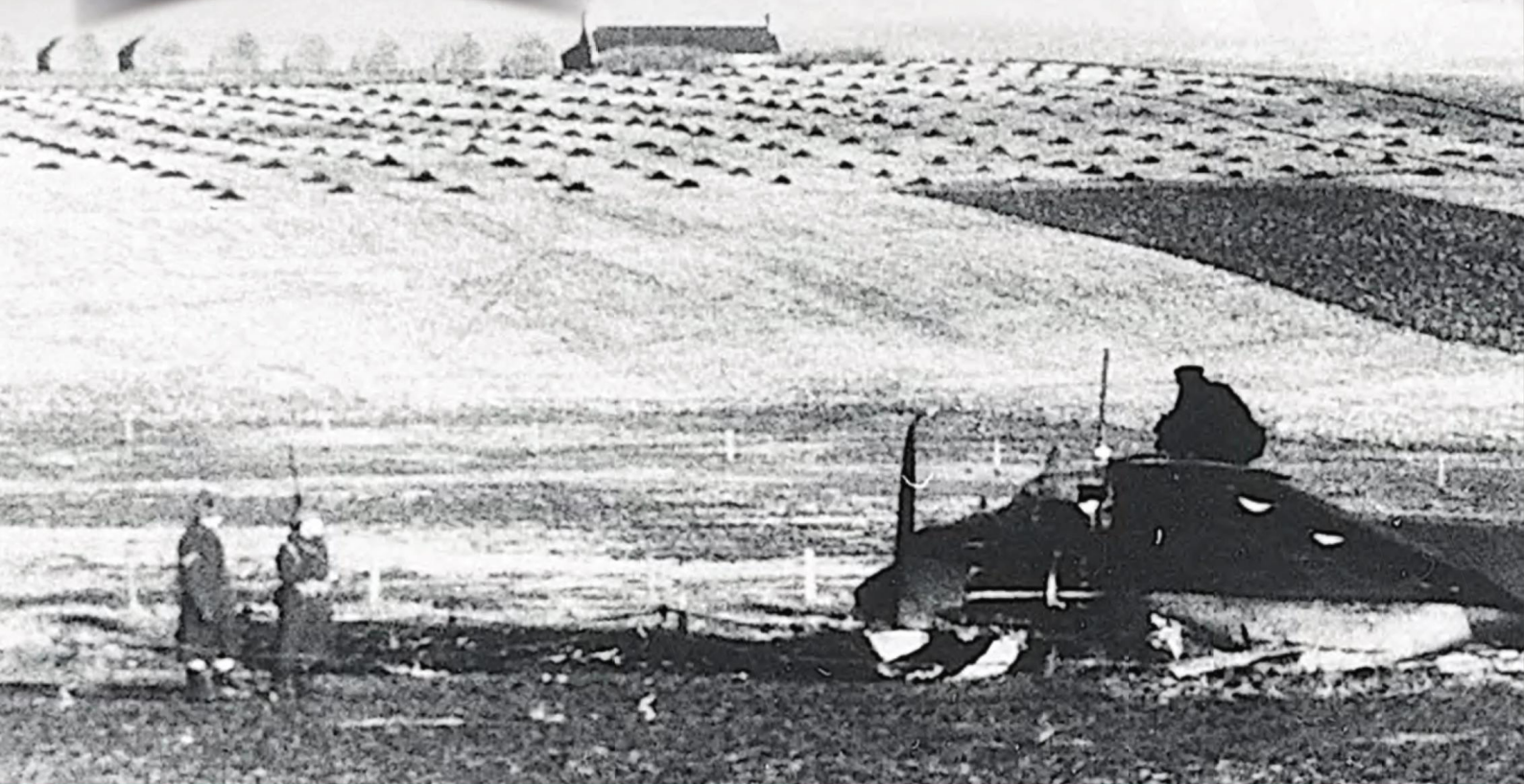
Above
August Klick's Bf 109E-4 in a scrapyard.

Left
Oblt Rudi Schmidt of 2/JG 53 was killed when his fighter crashed at Bearsted in Kent. He managed to bale out, but was too low.

FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



"As a single aircraft the Ju 88 was assessed as being on a recce and its likely destination identified. ...the sector controller scrambled fighters to intercept the intruder and shortly after 14:00 six Martlets were airborne."



WEINACHTEN

CHRISTMAS DAY HAD AN UNWELCOME OUTCOME FOR A GERMAN CREW AND AN UNEXPECTED 'PRESENT' FOR THE ROYAL NAVY, AS **ANDY THOMAS** REVEALS

in Orkney

Christmas Eve, or Heiligabend, 1940 was probably celebrated by Lt Karl Schipp and his crew with a traditional German meal of fish and potatoes. They were part of 3 (F)/122, a long-range reconnaissance unit based at Schiphol, near Amsterdam, flying Junkers Ju 88As.

Festivities on December 25 would depend on when Schipp returned from their duties: the crew was tasked to photograph the anchorage of the Royal Navy's Home Fleet and at Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands off the north coast of Scotland. Schipp, Fw H Schreiber, Uffz H Sportl and Obgf K Rotter took off in Ju 88A 535 '4N+AL' mid-morning and set course for their objective, 450 miles (724km) distant.

Based at Hatston on Orkney was 804 Squadron, Fleet Air Arm, under Lt Cdr B H M Kendall. In September 1940 the unit had begun re-equipping with the

Grumman Martlet, a variant of the US Navy F4F Wildcat, taken over from French contracts. By Christmas, 804 was operational and shared responsibility for the defence of the great naval base with RAF squadrons stationed in the area.

BLIP ON A SCREEN

RAF radar had been finely honed by the Luftwaffe attacks over the previous months, and as Schipp's Ju 88 crossed the North Sea it was detected. As a single aircraft it was assessed as being on a recce and its likely destination identified.

Eventually the sector controller scrambled fighters to intercept the intruder and shortly after 14:00 six Martlets were airborne. 'Red' Section comprised Lt R H P Carver in BJ562, leading Sub Lt Tom Parke in BJ561 and they closed to attack. Taking it in turn, the pair opened fire and hit the tailplane, starboard radiator and an oil pipe in the port engine with their 0.50in Browning machine-guns.

With damage to both engines, and his air gunner badly wounded, Schipp realised the long return flight over the North Sea was not possible. He skilfully landed his crippled aircraft on fields at Sandwick on the west side of mainland Orkney, to the north of Stromness.

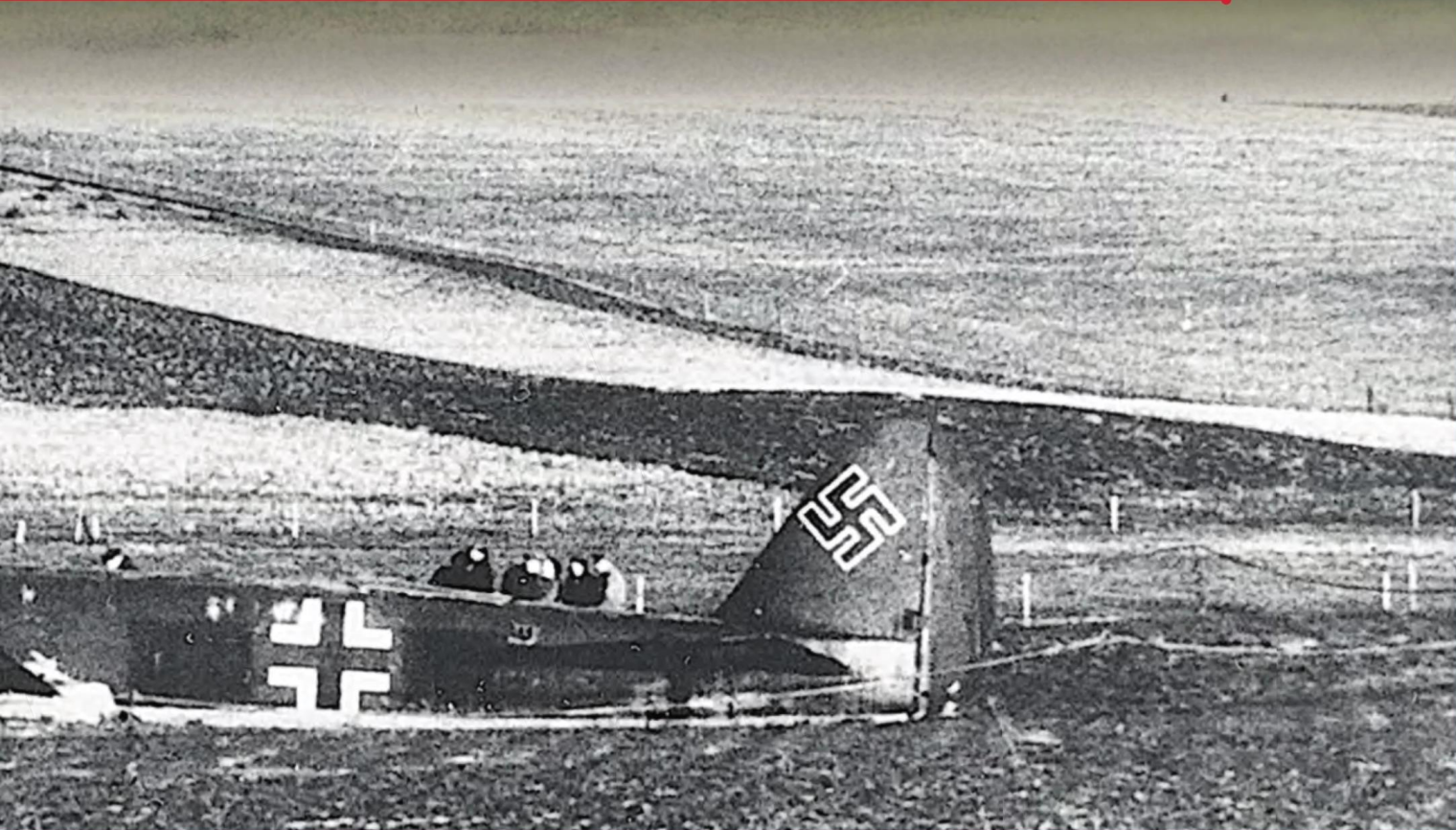
Two members of the Home Guard, farmer Thomas Marcus and his son Leslie, were quickly on the scene. They arrested the Germans before they could set fire to the Ju 88 and gave aid to the wounded gunner. To their undoubted chagrin, Schipp's crew ended Weihnachten (Christmas Day) in captivity.

Having watched their victim go down, Carver and Parke returned cock-a-hoop to Hatston, their seasonal celebrations capped by a moment of aviation history. Not only had they claimed 804 Squadron's first victory but it was the beginning of countless 'kills' for the Grumman fighter. †

Left
Martlet Is BJ561, unidentified and BJ562 of 804 Squadron.
R H P CARVER

Inset left
Lt Karl Schipp, his war ended on Christmas Day 1940. ORKNEY LIBRARY

Below
Ju 88A '4N+AL' of 3 (F)/122 after the crash-landing at Sandwick. R H P CARVER





Above, top right and below

To the north of Hull, 60 Maintenance Unit had a very busy Repair and Salvage Unit at Shipton-by-Beningbrough dealing with aircraft wreckage - Allied and Axis - over a huge area of the northeast of England. The tools of the trade were ubiquitous 'Queen Mary' flat-bed trailers, perfected to carry dismantled airframes, and lorry-mounted Coles cranes. The images show Flt Sgt E Robinson and his crew from 60 MU salvaging a Heinkel He 111 that was shot down while trying to attack Hull on May 12, 1941. It made a force-landing at Long Riston, to the north of the city. ALLIAN ROBINSON



LUFTWAFFE EAGLES

RECYCLED

REPAIR AND SALVAGE UNITS MADE SURE THAT LUFTWAFFE AIRCRAFT BROUGHT DOWN OVER BRITAIN WERE PUT TO GOOD USE



Workers pose for newspaper photographers at the huge yard of the civilian-run 50 Maintenance Unit at Cowley, Oxfordshire. No. 50 MU was one of several Repair and Salvage Units spread across the country collecting, dismantling and reprocessing Luftwaffe aircraft. Visible are Junkers Ju 88s, Heinkel He 111s and, on the right, a Messerschmitt Bf 109. The location of 50 MU at Cowley was not haphazard; it provided alloys that would become fighting vehicles and transports at the vast Morris Motors factory nearby.

VIA ERIC CLIFTON

FLÜGEL DES ADLERS



CHECK

Six

Adam Tooby's 'Check Six' provides an ideal way to 'top and tail' our anniversary Battle of Britain special. Our front cover showed Major Adolf Galland leading Bf 109Es of Stab/JG 26 over the Channel. Here, 'Dolfo' Galland is portrayed on August 15, 1940 when he was Gruppenkommandeur of III/JG 26, based at Caffiers and flying the Bf 109E. Encountering New Zealander Flt Lt 'Al' Deere, in a Spitfire I of 54 Squadron; the fight progressed to low level and the 'Kiwi' was eventually forced to bale out of his badly-damaged aircraft between Folkestone and Dover. At the time, Deere had shot down 17 enemy aircraft: this dogfight resulted in Galland's 22nd victory.

WARBIRDS THROUGH THE AGES



Recently published by Titan Books is *Warbirds - The Aviation Artwork of Adam Tooby*. This features over 200 of Adam's stunning images of aircraft in action from World War One to the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some of the images have been produced exclusively for the book, others have previously appeared on the covers of Airfix construction kit boxes. Step-by-step sections, close-ups showing the incredible accuracy and detail of the art - down to rivets and bolts - as well as historical context are sure to enthral aviation enthusiasts, military historians and artists. For details of the book and prints of Adam's work take a look at: www.adamtooby.com

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